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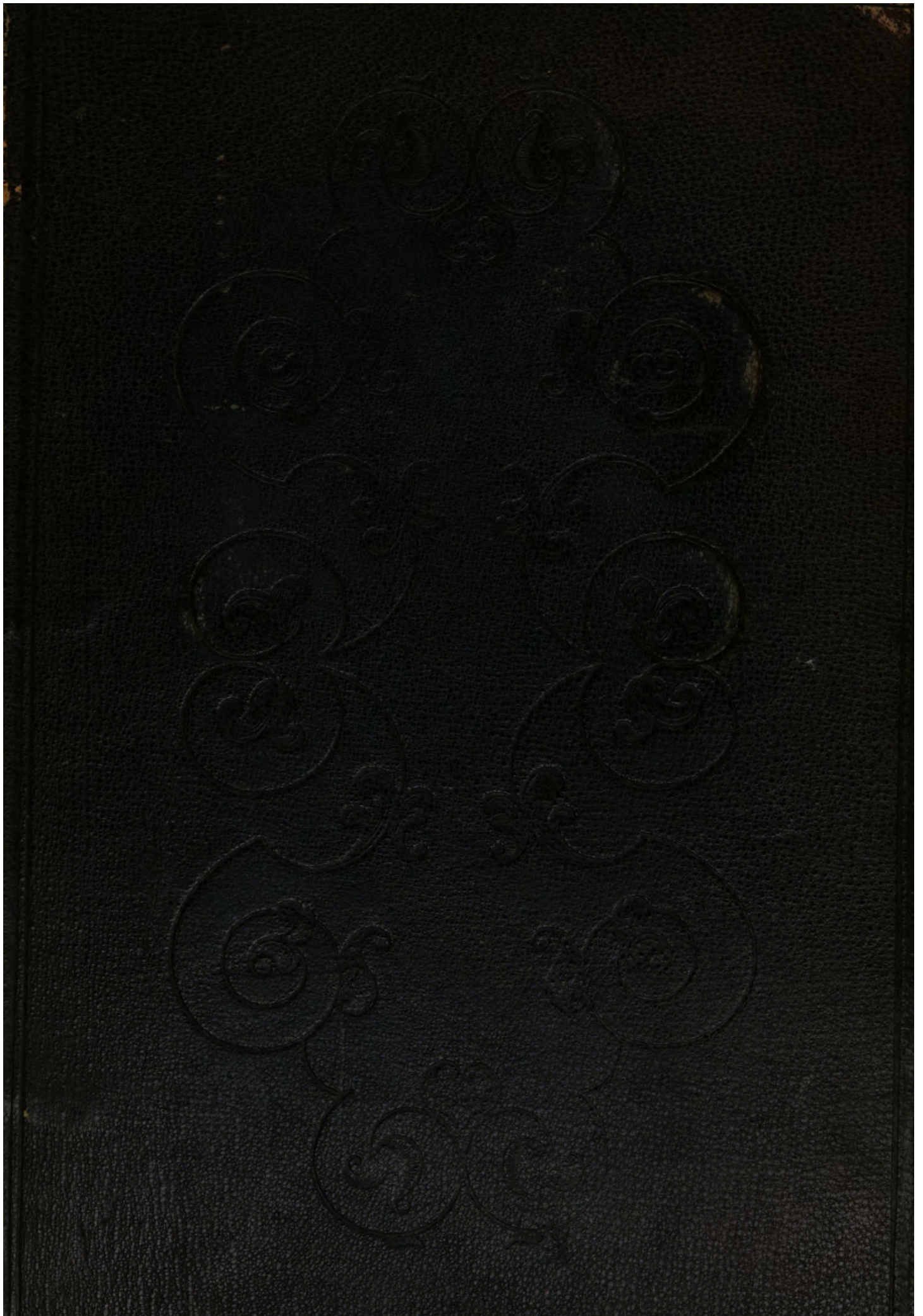
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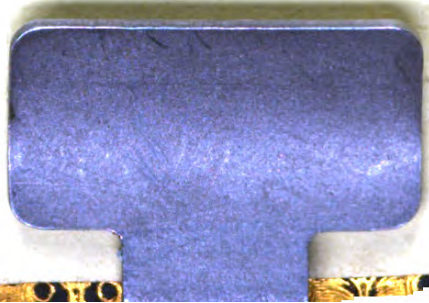


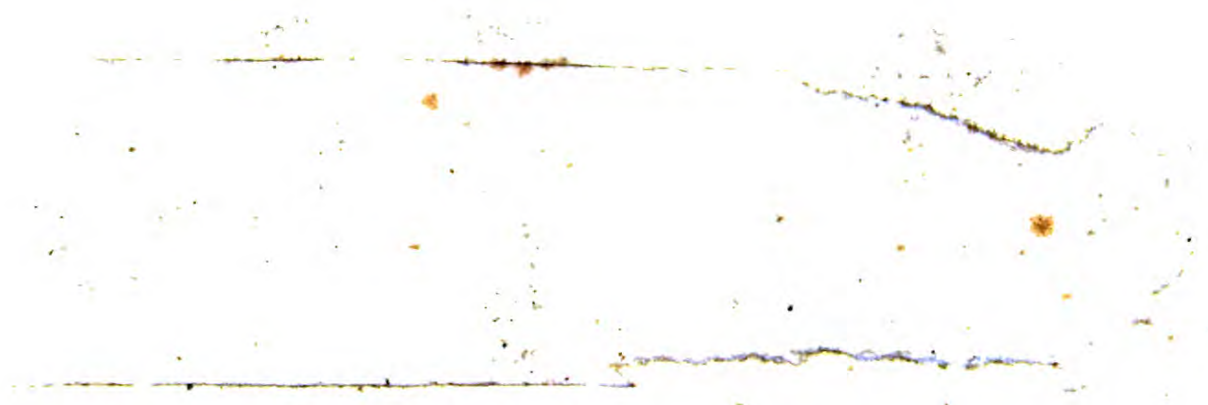
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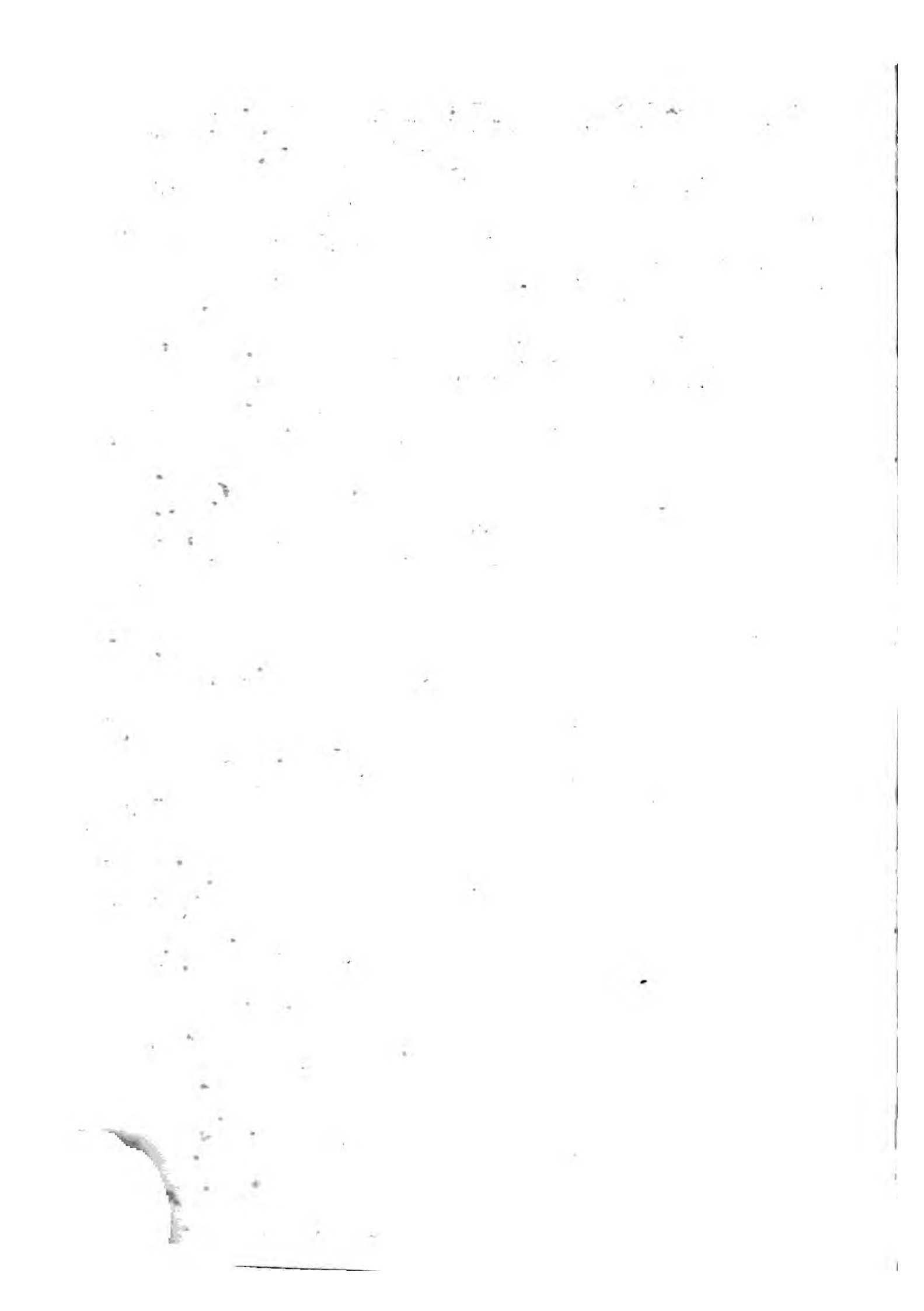
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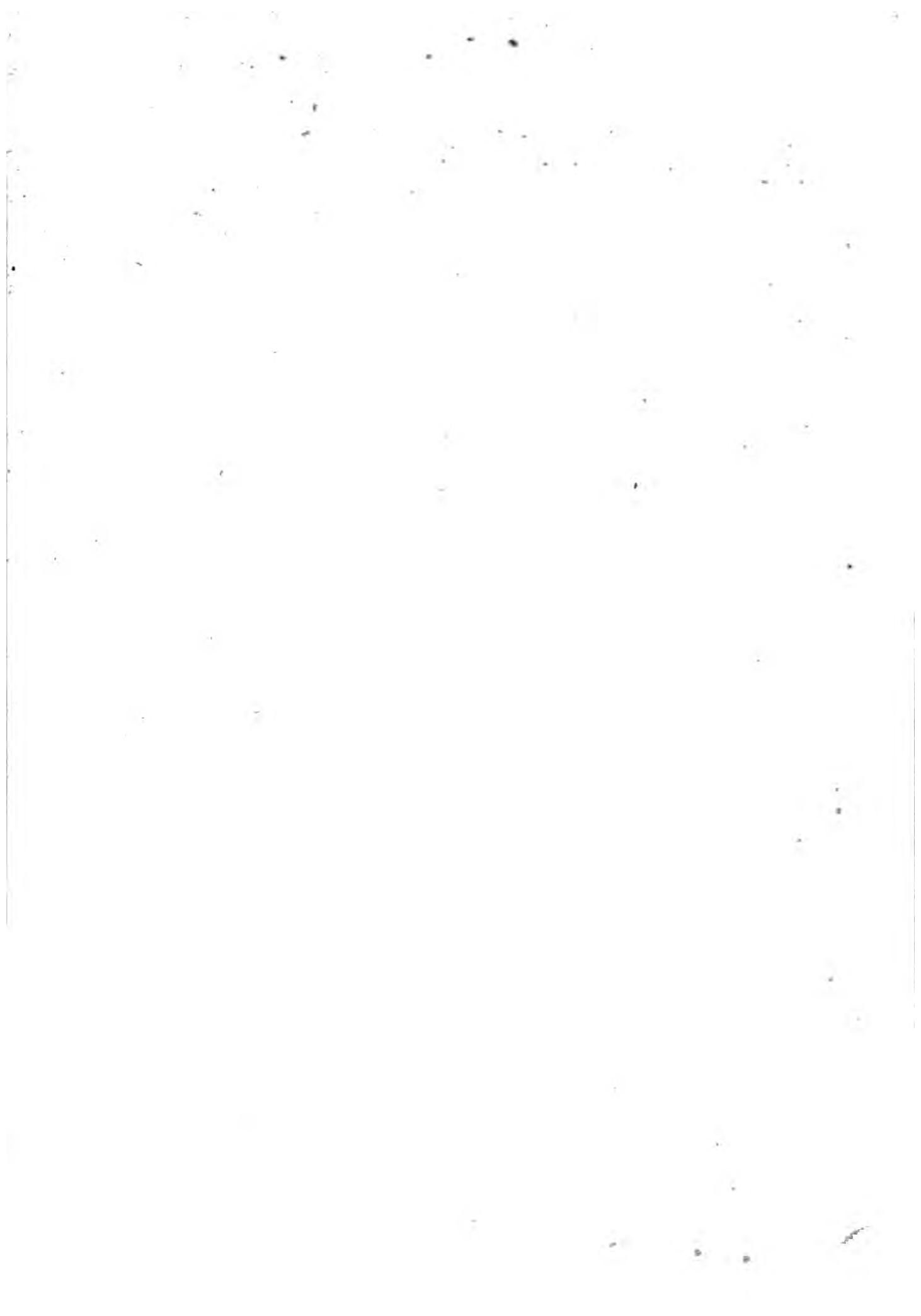


J. E. ...



TO MY FRIEND,

THE MARQUIS OF NORTHAMPTON.



26.

THE
POEMS
OF
RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES,
AUTHOR OF "MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN GREECE."



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



POEMS OF MANY YEARS.



LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.



MDCCCXXXVIII.

BRADBURY AND EVANS,
PRINTERS-EXTRAORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,
WHITEFRIARS.



POEMS
OF MANY YEARS.

THESE Poems of many years and many moods are entrusted to the sympathies of those who, having traversed the same fields of thought and of feeling, may recognise with a serious pleasure the memorials the writer has brought away.

He holds it to be the duty of every man to dispense and diffuse what has sprung up freshly and purely in his own moral being, if he possess the artistic means necessary to convey it agreeably to

others: and the merit of the poet will ever less depend on the perfection of the conduct, than on the virtue of the stream.

Should then this volume contain anything which shall be read not once only and aloud, but which shall be referred to in the solitude of the night-chamber, and remembered in the stillness of self-communion, one other voice may have been added to that vast world-chorus, which is ever rising from the universal Heart of man to the audience of God and infinite Time.

He lays just so much claim to originality as is implied in the assertion, that he has never consciously permitted himself the use of a thought or image which he knew to be elsewhere adequately expressed: how and how far he has been subject to the influ-

ences of contemporary literature, of the conversation of men of genius, of present manners and accidental conventions, he can no more calculate than he can adjust the effects of external nature upon his mind: for every writer is proportioned to his own age, though the greater are not confined within its limits.

N O T E.



IN the following pages the author has indulged in some slight deviations from the orthography that happens to be in common usage at this moment of our literature. It is as well that he should avow his opinion that, in works where all attainable nicety of diction is required, such license is most legitimate, and only restrained by a very foolish, as it is a very new-fashioned, tyranny of opinion,—while in writings, where the subject-matter is of far greater import than the manner in which it is presented, it is unadvisable, in the slightest degree, to check the course of any reader's apprehension.

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POEMS.

Most blind and impotent the verse that serves but to caress
World-blossoms for their beauty's sake, nor tries their power to bless:
Better that tears should ever flow, than smiles for ever shine
On all the evil mass that chokes in man the seed divine.

Yet none the clearer sight have they who can or will not see
How everywhere the life of Love still shows itself to be,—
Still pierces thro' the tangled growth of our bewildered plain,
And, trodden down a myriad times, still germinates again.

TO A CHILD

WITH BLACK EYES AND GOLDEN HAIR.

WHEN first, on that fair morn of May,
Thou came'st across my pilgrim way,
My joy was shaded by much fear ;
Thy hair, all made of very light,
Seemed almost too supremely bright
For Earth,—I askt, Why wert Thou here ?

But when I watcht those eyes below,
So clear, yet darkling like the flow
Of waters in a silent cave ;
I felt they were of human birth,
Of Earth, though of the best of Earth ;
Quietly lucid, sweetly grave.

Dear child, by Nature double-dowered,
Thee I would surely deem empowered
A great ensample-work to do ;
To show that Man, however crowned
With rays of Heavenly Love, is bound
To Earth's serene Affections too.

TO ————,
FIVE YEARS OLD.



DELIGHTED soul ! that in thy new abode
Dwellest contentedly and knowest not
What men can mean who faint beneath the load
Of mortal life and mourn an earthly lot ;

Who would believe thou wert so far from home ?
Who could suppose thee exiled or astray ?
This world of twilight whither thou art come
Seems just as welcome as thy native day.

That comely form, wherein thy thoughts are pent,
Hiding its rebel nature, serves thee still,
A pliable and pleasant instrument,
Harmonious to thy impulses and will.

Thou hast not spent as yet thy little store
Of happy instincts :—Thou canst still beguile
Painful reflection and ungrateful lore
With many a placid dream and causeless smile.

And when the awful stranger Evil bends
His eye upon thee, Thou wilt first essay
To turn him from his dark pursuits and ends
By gracious dalliance and familiar play :

As well might kindly words arrest the roll
Of billows raging o'er a wintry sea,—
O Providence ! remit to this one soul
Its destined years, and take it back to Thee.

A CHILD'S SONG.



I see the Moon, and the Moon sees me,
God bless the Moon, and God bless me.

OLD RHYME.



LADY MOON, Lady Moon, where are you roving?
Over the sea.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?
All that love me.

Are you not tired with rolling, and never
Resting to sleep?

Why look so pale, and so sad, as for ever
Wishing to weep?

Ask me not this, little child, if you love me ;
 You are too bold ;
I must obey my dear Father above me,
 And do as I'm told.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving ?
 Over the sea.
Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving ?
 All that love me.

YOUTH, that pursuest with such eager pace
Thy even way,
Thou pantest on to win a mournful race ;
Then stay ! oh, stay !

Pause and luxuriate in thy sunny plain ;
Loiter,—enjoy :
Once past, Thou never wilt come back again,
A second Boy.

The hills of Manhood wear a noble face,
When seen from far ;
The mist of light from which they take their grace
Hides what they are.

The dark and weary path those cliffs between
 Thou canst not know,
And how it leads to regions never-green,
 Dead fields of snow.

Pause, while thou mayst, nor deem that fate thy gain,
 Which, all too fast,
Will drive thee forth from this delicious plain,
 A Man at last.

A SHADOW, a light cloud, an April rain,
And twenty other vain similitudes,
Betoken that fast-springing Youth eludes
The full impression of continuous pain.
Strange fallacy! when all that then we feel
Strikes home,—the veriest trifles how profound!
When there is something in each precious wound
That searing Manhood almost fails to heal.
But let the harshnesses of daily life
And all the blunt world's businesses have set
A seal upon the fountain of the heart,
Then, tangled in the party-colored strife,
We throb with Love or Hate, we meet or part,
Sigh, tremble, weep, pass onward and forget.

THE FLIGHT OF YOUTH.

No, tho' all the winds that lie
In the circle of the sky
Trace him out and pray and moan,
Each in its most plaintive tone,—
No, tho' Earth be split with sighs,
And all the Kings that reign
Over Nature's mysteries
Be our faithfullest allies,
All—all is vain ;
They may follow on his track,
But He never will come back,
Never again !

Youth is gone away,
Cruel cruel Youth,
Full of gentleness and ruth
Did we think him all his stay ;

How had he the heart to wreak
Such a woe on us so weak,
He that was so tender-meek ?
How could he be made to learn
To find pleasure in our pain ?
Could he leave us, to return
Never again !

Bow your heads very low,
Solemn-measured be your paces,
Gathered up in grief your faces,
Sing sad music as ye go ;
In disordered handfuls strew
Strips of cypress, sprigs of rue ;
In your hands be borne the bloom,
Whose long petals once and only
Look from their pale-leavèd tomb
In the darkness lonely ;
Let the nightshade's beaded coral
Fall in melancholy moral
Your wan brows around,
While in very scorn ye fling
The amaranth upon the ground
As an unbelievèd thing ;

What care we for its fair tale
Of beauties that can never fail,
Glories that can never wane ?
No such blooms are on the track
He has past, who will come back
Never again !

Alas, we know not how he went,
We knew not he was going,
For had our tears once found a vent,
We' had stayed him with their flowing.
It was as an earthquake, when
We awoke and found him gone,
We were miserable men,
We were hopeless, every one !
Yes, he must have gone away
In his guise of every day,
In his common dress, the same
Perfect face and perfect frame ;
For in feature, for in limb,
Who could be compared to him ?
Firm his step, as one who knows
He is free, where'er he goes,
And withal as light of spring
As the arrow from the string ;

His impassioned eye had got
Fire which the sun has not ;
Silk to feel, and gold to see,
Fell his tresses full and free,
Like the morning mists that glide
Soft adown the mountain's side ;
Most delicious 'twas to hear
When his voice was trilling clear,
As a silver-hearted bell,
Or to follow its low swell,
When, as dreamy winds that stray
Fainting 'mid Æolian chords,
Inner music seemed to play
Symphony to all his words ;
In his hand was poised a spear,
Deftly poised, as to appear
Resting of its proper will,—
Thus a merry hunter still,
And engarlanded with bay,
Must our Youth have gone away,
Tho' we half remember now,
He had borne some little while
Something mournful in his smile—
Something serious on his brow :
Gentle Heart, perhaps he knew
The cruel deed he was about to do !

Now, between us all and Him
There are rising mountains dim,
Forests of uncounted trees,
Spaces of unmeasured seas :
Think, with Him how gay of yore
We made sunshine out of shade,—
Think with Him how light we bore
All the burden sorrow laid ;
All went happily about Him,—
How shall we toil on without Him ?
How without his cheering eye
Constant strength embreathing ever ?
How without Him standing by
Aiding every hard endeavour ?
For when faintness or disease
Had usurped upon our knees,
If he deigned our lips to kiss
With those living lips of his,
We were lightened of our pain,
We were up and hale again :—
Now, without one blessing glance
From his rose-lit countenance,
We shall die, deserted men,—
And not see him, even then !

We are cold, very cold,—
All our blood is drying old,
And a terrible heart-dearth
Reigns for us in heaven and earth :
Forth we stretch our chilly fingers
In poor effort to attain
Tepid embers, where still lingers
Some preserving warmth, in vain.
Oh ! if Love, the Sister dear
Of Youth that we have lost,
Come not in swift pity here,
Come not, with a host
Of Affections, strong and kind,
To hold up our sinking mind,
If She will not, of her grace,
Take her Brother's holy place,
And be to us, at least a part
Of what He was, in Life and Heart,
The faintness that is on our breath
Can have no other end but Death.

Oh! that I were, as I was, in the days of my youth,
when the secret of God was upon my Tabernacle!

JOB, xxix. 4.

✕

Six years, six cycles of dead hours,
Six falls of leaves, six births of flowers,
It is not that, you know full well,
That makes my labo'ring bosom swell,
'Tis not the memory of lost Time,
Since last I heard that matin chime,
That brings to sense a sleeping sorrow,
To bid this long-left scene good-morrow,—
It is the curse to feel as men,
And be not now, as we were then.

The snowy down on yonder hill
 Through thousand summers glistens still,—
 Yon stream will ne'er to time surrender
 Its rapid path of diamond splendour,—
 Yon orb, but now who swept the East,
 With train of ruby' and amethyst,
 Rides on, unweariedly as ever,
 O'er frowning rock, and glitte'ring river ;
 Those trees, I own, are somewhat higher,—
 The ivy round the village spire
 In fuller-cluste'ring leaf has grown,—
 We cannot call that cot our own,—
 But what has changed in this sweet glen
 As we from what our hearts were then ?
 Say you, the glow of hope is bright,
 And if it be a meteor light,
 That hurtles through the thicke'ning sky,
 'Tis wise to catch it ere it die ?
 Tell you me, 'tis a joy to feel
 Our toil increase a fellow's weal ?
 That, 'mid these fainting, fading, bowers,
 There linger still some ama'ranth flowers,
 And honest will, and honest prayer,
 Will find them lurking everywhere ?—

Say on, I can but add, Amen,—
 We are not now as we were then.

Oh, Brother ! when I gaze upon
 These tombs of little blisses gone,—
 When, through the dense and steamy air,
 Which we with men are wont to share,
 A breeze of distant youth has stole
 In freshness on my fevered soul,—
 I feel like one who long has lain
 With madness gathe'ring in his brain,
 And, bursting from the strong distress,
 Wakes to a terrible consciousness.
 Then blame you, that my pulse beat now,
 Blame you the agony on my brow ?
 There *was*, when fear was all a stranger,
 Ere knowledge showed the way to danger,—
 When love was firm,—when faith was sure,
 And head and heart alike secure ;—
 But now, . . . Remember you a flower,
 Which we with care, from sun and shower,—
 It was our mother's,—loved to guard,
 And how we joyed in our reward,
 When first we watcht its bloom appear,
 When it was old so many a year ;

And how we heard, with tearful eye,
 The good old gardener's prophecy,—
 For he was deep in nature's lore,—
 That that bright plant would bloom no more?
 The flowers fell off,—the stalk was gathered,—
 The root grew dry,—the lank leaves withered,—
 And, sad to lose its only pride,
 The poor Agave sunk and died:
Our one, *our* only bloom is gone,
 But, Brother, still we linger on.

Between the cradle and the shroud,
 If chance, amid the pilgrim croud,
 Though strange the time and strange the place,
 We light on some familiar face,
 Once loved and known, as friend knows friend,
 In whom a thousand memories blend,
 Which whilom slumbered dull and dim,
 But rise in light and cling to him;
 Though not a trait of old as wont,
 Though care has knit the ample front,
 And vice unstrung the well-toned frame,
 Still something,—*something* is the same.
 But if we ever hope to find
 Some traces in that life-worn mind

Of its pure self, its simple being,
 Such as it was, when, unforeseeing,
 We thought that Nature's laws would fail,
 Ere Sin could make its boldness quail ;
 Such as it was, ere sensuous things
 Had clipt the bird of Eden's wings,
 Ere stifled groan and secret sigh
 Replaced the tear so soon brusht by,—
 'Tis vain,—alas, for human shame !
 There nothing, *nothing* is the same.

O that the painter's favo'rite scheme
 Were not alone a painter's dream !
 O that the Paradise he feigns,
 Where Innocence with Childhood reigns,
 And cherub forms and infant guise
 Inclose the heart divinely wise,
 Were not alone a Poet's creed,—
 No symbol,—but a truth indeed !
 That all this circling life might close
 Its wearied course where first it rose,
 And that our second life must be
 A new, eternal, infancy,
 Keeping the bliss we lose as men,
 To be for aye as we were then !

By eating the fruit that grows on the banks of the river of Delight,
in the Anostum, in the country of the Meropes, men gain a blessed
course of life, without one moment of sadness ;—when they are in
years, by little and little they wax young again, recovering their
former vigor and force, and thence they turn still backward, even to
their first infancy, becoming little babes again, and then they die.

ANTONIO DE TORQUEMADA.

I.

BACK again, back again !
We are passing back again ;
We are ceasing to be men !
 Without the strife
 Of waning life,
 Or weary fears
 Of loveless years,—

Without the darkened eye,
 Without the paling brow,
 Without a pulse of pain,
 Out of our maturity,
 We are passing now
 Back again !

ii.

Clap your hands ! clap your hands !
 Now are broken all the bands
 Of dull forms and phantom power,
 That could prevent us doing
 What joy would wish to do,—
 For out of manhood's ruin,
 We are growing, hour by hour,
 Happy children too !—
 From out the din
 And storm of sin,
 From out the fight
 Of wrong and right,
 Where the wrong
 Is all too strong,
 We glide our backward course along :
 From out the chilly weather,
 In which we laid, of old,
 Our hearts so close together,

To keep them from the cold,—
 From the folly of the wise,
 From the petty war of gain,
 From Pleasure's painèd votaries,
 We' are hasting back again,
 Into other, healthier lands,—
 Clap your hands,—
 Back again !

iii.

Faery fruit ! faery fruit !
 Can our charmèd hearts be mute,
 When they feel at work within
 Thy almighty medicine ?
 Joy through all our hearts is tingling,—
 Joy with our life-blood is mingling,—
 Before us rise
 The dancing eyes,
 That cannot speak
 Of aught but light,
 Unknowing gloom,—
 The rounded cheek,
 For ever bright
 With cool, red, bloom ;—
 Our faded leaves are closing,
 Our petals are reposing

Within their undeveloped stem ;—
 It is beautiful to see
 Archetypes of infancy,
 For we are growing like to them.
 The wisdom of the common earth,
 And Reason's servile royalty,
 Dust to dust,—the nothing-worth,—
 Tread it down triumphantly,
 To a just oblivion,—
 Freely-springing hearts and pure,
 Who are putting on
 Consecrated vestiture
 Of a new, old, communion !—

iv.

Our home ! our home !
 Our native air,—our brothers' song,
 That we have lost so long !
 We are worthy *now* to come,
 Where dwelleth the Divine ;—
 Thro' the narrow door of Death
 Pass ;—we breathe eternal breath,—
 Father ! father ! we are thine !

YOUTH'S FAIR RESOLVE.



DEAR friend, I would that our free life should be
Like the red blood that bounding from the heart
Speeds onward through each ministe'ring artery,
Bearing fresh force to each remotest part,
And stagnates never,
Till Death's uncouth and wintry mastery
Dams up the river.

Is it because our fellows are depraved
That we should leave our work, and be like them ?
No,—if the laws of love and truth are braved,
From peasant's cap to jewelled diadem,—
The more's the pity ;
“ Ten righteous men,” the Patriarch says, “ had saved
“ The heaven-curst city.”

The hermit sage, and antient anchorite,
 Who went to wilds, and made the wolves their friends,
 Even they perchance had fought a better fight,
 And served more righteously their being's ends,
 Had they remained
 In the world's pale, and kept, with perilous might,
 Their faith unstained :

Had they abandoned ev'en the commune high
 Which oft in solitude they held with God,—
 The lonely prayer, the speechless ecstasy,
 In which the angel-paths of Heaven they trod,
 And sacrificed
 Upon that altar which saw Jesus die,
 What best they prized.

+ And I—oh ! think you not I too have known
 'Tis sweet to muse beneath the old elm tree,
 While night lets loose her drapery's spangled zone,
 Or watch the sun-god woo the western sea,
 With rich parade,
 And send my thoughts, to brave adventure prone,
 On strange crusade ? +

Or else with you a' strolling hand in hand
Break lances in a tournament of rhyme,—
Dispute about the tints of faery-land,—
Or, by some heritage which olden Time
Has left the wise,
Bid wondrous pageants, as by sorce'rer's wand,
Before us rise.

If life were all like this to you and me,
How would it matter to be young or old?
Where is the privilege of youth's buoyancy,
Could we thus turn Time's iron scythe to gold?
The pleasures given
To man were all too great, and there would be
No want of heaven.

Let us go forth, and resolutely dare,
With sweat of brow, to toil our little day,—
And if a tear fall on the task of care,
In memory of those spring-hours past away,
Brush it not by!
Our hearts to God! to brother-men
Aid, labor, blessing, prayer, and then
To these a sigh. —

THE LAY OF THE HUMBLE.

Le bon Dieu me dit—" Chante,
Chante, pauvre petit."

BERANGER.

I HAVE no comeliness of frame,
No pleasant range of feature ;
I'am feeble, as when first I came
To earth, a weeping creature ;
My voice is low whene'er I speak,
And singing faint my song ;
But though thus cast among the weak,
I envy not the strong.

The trivial part in life I play
Can have so light a bearing
On other men, who, night or day,
For me are never caring ;
That, though I find not much to bless,
Nor food for exaltation,
I know that I am tempted less,—
And that is consolation.

The beautiful ! the noble blood !
I shrink as they pass by,—
Such power for evil or for good
Is flashing from each eye ;
They are indeed the stewards of Heaven,
High-headed and strong-handed :
From those, to whom so much is given,
How much may be demanded !

'Tis true, I am hard buffeted,
Though few can be my foes,
Harsh words fall heavy on my head,
And unresisted blows ;
But then I think, " had I been born,—
Hot spirit—sturdy frame—
And passion prompt to follow scorn,—
I might have done the same."

To me men are for what they are,
They wear no masks with me ;
I never sicken'd at the jar
Of ill-tuned flattery ;
I never mourned affections lent
In folly or in blindness ;—
The kindness that on me is spent
Is pure, unasking, kindness.

‡ And most of all, I never felt
The agonizing sense
Of seeing love from passion melt
Into indifference :
The fearful shame, that day by day
Burns onward, still to burn,
To' have thrown your precious heart away,
And met this black return. †

I almost fancy that the more
I am cast out from men,
Nature has made me of her store
A worthier denizen ;
As if it pleased her to caress
A plant grown up so wild,
As if the being parentless
Made me the more *her* child.

Athwart my face when blushes pass
To be so poor and weak,
I fall unto the dewy grass,
And cool my fevered cheek ;
And hear a music strangely made,
That you have never heard,
A sprite in every rustling blade,
That sings like any bird.

My dreams are dreams of pleasantness,—
But yet I always run,
As to a father's morning kiss,
When rises the round sun ;
I see the flowers on stalk and stem,
Light shrubs, and poplars tall,
Enjoy the breeze,—I rock with them,
We' are merry brothers all.

I do remember well, when first
I saw the great blue sea,—
It was no stranger-face, that burst
In terror upon me ;
My heart began, from the first glance,
His solemn pulse to follow,
I danced with every billow's dance,
And shouted to their hollo.

The Lamb that at its mother's side
Reclines, a tremulous thing,
The Robin in cold winter-tide,
The Linnet in the Spring,
All seem to be of kin to me,
And love my slender hand,—
For we are bound, by God's decree,
In one defensive band.

And children, who the worldly mind
And ways have not put on,
Are ever glad in me to find
A blithe companion :
And when for play they leave their homes,
Left to their own sweet glee,
They hear my step, and cry, " He comes,
" Our little friend,—'tis he."

Have you been out some starry night,
And found it joy to bend
Your eyes to one particular light,
Till it became a friend ?
And then, so loved that gliste'ning spot,
That, whether it were far
Or more or less, it mattered not,—
It still was your own star.

Thus, and thus only, can you know,
How I, even scornèd I,
Can live in love, tho' set so low,
And' my ladie-love so high ;
Thus learn, that on this varied ball,
Whate'er can breathe and move,
The meanest, lornest, thing of all—
Still owns its right to love.

With no fair round of household cares
Will my lone hearth be blest,
Nor can the snow of my old hairs
Fall on a loving breast ;
No darling pledge of spousal faith
Shall I be found possessing,
To whom a blessing with my breath
Would be a double blessing :

But yet my love with sweets is rife,
With happiness it teems,
It beautifies my waking life,
And waits upon my dreams ;
A shape that floats upon the night,
Like foam upon the sea,—
A voice of seraphim,—a light
Of present Deity !

† I hide me in the dark arcade,
When she walks forth alone,—
I feast upon her hair's rich braid,—
Her half-unclaspèd zone :
I watch the flittings of her dress,
The bending boughs between,—
I trace her footstep's faery press
On' the scarcely ruffled green. †

Oh deep delight ! the frail guitar
Trembles beneath her hand,
She sings a song she brought from far,
I cannot understand ;
Her voice is *always* as from heaven,
But yet I seem to hear
Its music best, when thus 'tis given
All music to my ear.

She' has turned her tender eyes around,
And seen me crouching there,
And smiles, just as that last full sound
Is fainting on the air ;
And now, I can go forth so proud,
And raise my head so tall,—
My heart within me beats so loud,
And musical withal :—

And there is summer all the while,
Mid-winter tho' it be,—
How should the universe not smile,
When she has smiled on me?
For tho' that smile can nothing more
Than merest pity prove,
Yet pity, it was sung of yore,
Is not *so* far from love.

From what a croud of lovers' woes
My weakness is exempt!
How far more fortunate than those
Who mark me for contempt!
No fear of rival happiness
My fervent glory smothers,
The zephyr fans me none the less
That it is bland to others.

Thus without share in coin or land,
But well content to hold
The wealth of Nature in my hand,
One flail of virgin gold,—
My Love above me like a sun,—
My own bright thoughts my wings,—
Thro' life I trust to flutter on,
As gay as aught that sings.

One hour I own I dread,—to die
Alone and unbefriended,—
No soothing voice, no tearful eye,—
But that must soon be ended ;
And then I shall receive my part
Of everlasting treasure,
In that just world where each man's heart
Will be his only measure.

STANZAS.



BECAUSE, from all that round Thee move,
Planets of Beauty, Strength, and Grace,
I am elected to Thy love,
And have my home in Thy embrace,
I wonder all men do not see
The crown that Thou hast set on me.

Because, when prostrate at Thy feet,
Thou didst emparadise my pain,—
Because Thy heart on mine has beat,
Thy head within my hands has lain,
I am transfigured, by that sign,
Into a being like to Thine.

The mirror from its glossy plain
Receiving still returns the light,
And being generous of its gain,
Augments the very solar might :
What unreflected light would be,
Is just Thy spirit without me.

Thou art the flame, whose rising spire
In the dark air sublimely sways,
And I the tempest that swift fire
Gathers at first and then obeys :
All that was Thine ere we were wed
Have I by right inherited.

Is life a stream ? Then from Thy hair
One rosebud on the current fell,
And straight it turned to crystal there,
As adamant immoveable :
Its steadfast place shall know no more
The sense of after and before.

Is life a plant ? The King of years
To mine nor good nor ill can bring ;—
Mine grows no more ; no more it fears
Even the brushing of his wing :
With sheathèd scythe I see him go,—
I have no flowers that *he* can mow.

AN ANSWER.



ALL fair things have soft approaches,
Quiet steps are still the sure ;
It were hard to point aright
At what instant morning light
Shy and solemn-paced encroaches
On the desolate obscure ;—
Who can read the growth of flowers
Syllable by syllable ?
Who has sight or ear to tell,
Or by moments or by hours,
At what rate the sappy tree,
Full of life, and life in spring,
Every sleekest limb embosses
With the buds its vigor glosses,—
At what rate the buds with glee
Burst, and show the tender wing

Of the leaf that hardly dares
Trust to inexperienced airs ?
Who can measure out the pace
Of the smiles on Nature's face ?

Thou loveliest of the thoughts of God,
Creation's antitype and end,
Thou treadest so the vernal sod
That slimmest grasses hardly bend ;—
I feel thy presence sensible
On my ideal supervene,
Yet just the moment cannot tell
That lies those two bright states between ;—
No memory has an arm to reach
The morning twilight of our thought,—
The infant's use of sight and speech
Is all unchallenged and unsought ;
And yet thou askest, winning one,
That I should now unriddler be,
To tell thee when I first begun
To love and honor Thee !

SONGS,

FROM THE VENETIAN OF BURATTI.



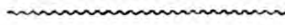
1.

PLEASANT were it, Nina mine,
Could our Hearts, by faery powers,
Renovate their life divine,
Like the trees and herbs and flowers.

So might we, in fond accord,
As the fresh ripe Hearts appear ;
Each the other's Love reward,
With the first-fruits of the year.

Fragrance from that wondrous plant
Might your giddy sex restrain,—
Such refreshment would enchant
The most faithless back again.

But in restless pleasure using
 One poor Heart, from year to year,
 We shall both our Hearts be losing,—
 Worn to nothing,—Nina dear.



II.

OH! what a May-day,— what a dear May-day!
 Feel, what a breeze, love,
 Undulates o'er us,—
 Meadow and trees, love,
 Glisten before us,—
 Light, in all showers,
 Falls from the flowers,
 Hear, how they ask us, “ Come and sit down.”—(*Bis.*)

Well, let us rest with them,—well let us rest with them,
 Two other blossoms,
 Quiet and lonely,
 While from their bosoms
 Nightingales only
 Secrets revealing,
 We shall be stealing
 Things that most surely the world doesn't know.—(*Bis.*)

Guess, my own Nina,—guess, my own Nina,
 What they are singing !
 That a deep passion,
 Rooted and clinging
 I' the right fashion,
 Never can measure
 Fullness of pleasure,
But when together alone,—all alone !—(*Bis.*)

Fare you well, old world !—fare you well, old world !
 This one is ours,
 Shepherds,—May-weather, —
 We and the flowers
 Blooming together,—
 Where, never jealous,
 Nightingales tell us
What they know, oh ! how much, better than we !—(*Bis.*)

SONG,

AFTER THE OLD MANNER.

My heart is freighted full of love,
As full as any argosy,
With gems below and gems above,
And ready for the open sea,
For the wind is blowing summerly.

Full strings of nature's beaded pearl,
Sweet tears ! composed in amorous ties ;
And turkis-lockets, that no churl
Hath fashioned out mechanic-wise,—
But all made up of thy blue eyes :

And girdles wove of subtle sound,
And thoughts not trusted to the air,
Of antique mould,—the same as bound,
In Paradise, the primal pair,
Before Love's arts and niceness were :

And carcanets of living sighs ;
Gums that had dropt from Love's own stem ;
And one small jewel most I prize, —
The darling gaud of all of them, —
I wot, so rare and fine a gem
Ne'er glowed on Eastern anadem.

I've cased the rubies of thy smiles,
In rich and triply-plated gold ;
But *this* no other wealth defiles,
Itself itself can only hold—
—The stealthy kiss on Maple-wold.

LINES

WRITTEN AT THE BATHS OF LUCCA.



THE fireflies, pulsing forth their rapid gleams,
Are the' only light
That breaks the night ;
A stream, that has the voice of many streams,
Is the' only sound
All around :
And we have found our way to the rude stone,
Where many a twilight we have sat alone,
Though in this summer darkness never yet :
We have had happy, happy, moments here,
We have had thoughts we never can forget,
Which will go on with us beyond the bier.
The very lineaments of thy dear face
I do not see, but yet its influence

I feel, ev'en as my outward sense perceives
The freshe'ning presence of the chesnut leaves,
Whose vaguest forms my eye can only trace,
By following where the darkness seems most dense.
What light, what sight, what form, can be to us
Beautiful as this gloom ?
We have come down, alive and consciöus,
Into a blessèd tomb :
We' have left the world behind us,
Her vexations cannot find us,
We are too far away ;
There is *something* to gainsay
In the life of every day ;
But in this delicious death
We let go our mortal breath,
Nought to feel and hear and see,
But our hearts' felicity ;
Nought with which to be at war,
Nought to fret our shame or pride,
Knowing only that we are,
Caring not what is beside.

FAMILIAR LOVE.

WE read together, reading the same book,
Our heads bent forward in a half embrace,
So that each shade that either spirit took
Was strait reflected in the other's face :
We read, not silent, nor aloud, but each
Followed the eye that past the page along,
With a low murmuring sound, that was not speech,
 Yet with so much monotony,
 In its half slumbering harmony,
 You might not call it song ;
 More like a bee, that in the noon rejoices,
Than any customed mood of human voices.

Then if some wayward or disputed sense
Made cease awhile that music, and brought on
A strife of gracious-worded difference,
Too light to hurt our souls' dear unison,
We had experience of a blissful state,
In which our powers of thought stood separate,
Each, in its own high freedom, set apart,
But both close folded in one loving heart ;
So that we seemed, without conceit, to be
Both one and two in our identity.

We prayed together, praying the same prayer,
But each that prayed did seem to be alone,
And saw the other in a golden air
Poised far away, beneath a vacant throne,
Becko'ning the kneeler to arise and sit
Within the glory which encompass it :
And when obeyed, the Vision stood beside,
And led the way through the' upper hyaline,
Smiling in beauty tenfold glorified,
Which, while on earth, had seemed enough divine,
The beauty of the Spirit-Bride,
Who guided the rapt Florentine.

The depth of human reason must become
As deep as is the holy human heart,
Ere aught in written phrases can impart
The might and meaning of that extasy
To those low souls, who hold the mystery
Of the' unseen universe for dark and dumb.

But we were mortal still, and when again
We raised our bended knees, I do not say
That our descending spirits felt no pain
To meet the dimness of an earthly day ;
Yet not as those disheartened, and the more
Debased, the higher that they rose before,
But, from the exaltation of that hour,
Out of God's choicest treasury, bringing down
New virtue to sustain all ill,—new power
To braid Life's thorns into a regal crown,
We past into the outer world, to prove
The strength miraculous of united Love.

POETRY AND THE POET.

WHEN, in a frame of liquid verse,
I read you how pure Love's delight
Is turned to Life's consummate curse,
By woman's pride and hard despite,—
Full many a sympathising chord
Vibrated all your soul along ;
You trembled at each poignant word,
And wept ere I had closed the song.

But when, in rude and broken prose,
I laid my heart before you bare,—
Dared the deep misery to disclose,
Which you had long awakened there ;

A trivial laugh, a pitying look
(Yet half of scorn) was all you gave,—
You bent before the lifeless Book,
Though loth a living Heart to save.

My Art is not a vulgar craft
To work some passing Pleasure-spell,—
There is no virtue in the draught
For those who desecrate the well :
Proud Loveliness ! retain your sway,—
Leave me to suffer as I can,
But do not seem to love the Lay,
And mock the Poet and the Man.

TO MYRRHA,

ON PARTING.

I KNOW not, whether such great power
Is in despair,—it may be so,—
But, Myrrha, ere this ebbing hour
Is over, I will try to go :
Once more the glory of your form
Shall fall upon my path,—once more !
And fear not lest the inner storm
Should burst the bounds it kept before.

I have one last, light boon to pray—
Do not be mercilessly kind ;
Hold back your hand, and turn away
Those splendors I must leave behind ;

Or arm your eyes with chilly glare,
(Though wont to be so burning-bright)
Like their far sisters of the air,
Which light, but cannot warm, the night.

But most of all, I could not bear
From you that mocking word, "Farewell!"—
How well my riven heart will fare,
I think I have not now to tell.
Be silent, passionless—the ghost
Of your own self—a solemn shade,
Whose form, to others wholly lost,
In my deep soul, as in a grave, is laid.

TO MYRRHA,

ON RETURNING.

My spirit staggered at the sight,
So painful and so strange,
I could not think, that years had might
To work such fearful change ;
And ere I ceased from wondering,
My tears fell fast and free,
That wretched, stricken, hopeless, thing, —
I dared not call it Thee.

If I had heard that thou wert dead,
I hastily had cried,
“ She was so richly favorèd,
God must forgive her pride ;
My heart lay withered, while the crown
Of life was fresh upon her, —
I linger still, she has gone down
In beauty and in honor.”

But now, to see thy living death,—
Power, glory, arts, all gone,—
Thy empire lost, and thy poor breath
Still vainly struggling on !
Alas ! a thought of saddest weight
Presses and will have vent :
“ Had she not scorned my love,—her fate
Had been so different !

“ Had her heart bent its haughty will
To take me for its lord,
She had been proudly happy still,
Still honored, still adored ;
The weak love-ties of face and frame
Time easily may sever,
But *I* had thought her still the same,
As beautiful as ever.

“ She had *then* felt no shame or sorrow,
At seeing fall away
The slaves who mock the god to-morrow,
They worshipt all to-day ;
While I preserved, with honest truth,
Through every varying stage,
Her image which adorned my youth,
To glorify my age.”

And do not treat this thought as light,—
Nor ask, with taunting sign,
“ Has then thy life-course been so bright
That thou canst scorn at mine ?”
Myrrha,—the name of Misery
Is clear upon my brow,
Yet am I not, nor e'er can be,
So lorn a thing as Thou.

He, who for Love has undergone
The worst that can befall,
Is happier thousand-fold than one,
Who never loved at all ;
A grace within his soul has reigned,
Which nothing else can bring—
Thank God for all that I have gained,
By that high suffering !

FROM THE ITALIAN
OF
MICHEL AGNOLO.

I.

I READ deep mysteries in thy loveliness,
With my thought's eye, unutterable here ;
I trace a soul, though bound in fleshly dress,
Alive with beauty, and to God most near ;
And if the ribald crowd, the base or vain,
At one, who is not of them, point and jeer,
I have not less my glory and my gain,
Strong will,—pure love,—and loyalty sincere.
To that blest source, whence Man and Nature flow,
All beauty bears affinity—this below,
More than aught else, to seek becomes the wise ;
Nor other heav'n-dropt fruit, nor mightier sign,
Is granted us,—but love, and love like mine,
Lifts us to God, and makes Death Paradise.

II.

Now to old feelings I come back,
With age of heart and years opprest,
As all things from a wand'ring track
Turn to their centre's natu'ral rest.
In heaven's own hand, the keys I found
An entrance to her heart to win,
While Love the gentle lock turned round,
To let the pure Adorer in.
All ill desires she chases far,
And, where the few and godlike are,
Though all outworn, she bids me speed ;
Such graces on her presence wait,
So precious-sweet, so marvellous-great,
That Death for Her is Life indeed.

ACROSTIC.

IN THE BEGINNING OF AN ALBUM.

—♦—

MANY a leaf of motley hue,
Amber, rose, and tender blue,
Runs between the custom'd white,
In this book, where lady's knight
Any random verse may write.

Joyous thought and witty line
Alternating with neat design,
Never shut to fools or sages,
Ever fill these varied pages !

Nature's hand has fashioned thee
Even as this book to be ;
With a heart where Life will throw
Tinted lights of joy and woe
O'er the Album, but as yet
New, unwritten on,—as yet !

ELVEDEN, 1831.

THERE' are gold-bright Suns in worlds above,
And blazing gems in worlds below,
Our world has Love and only Love,
For living warmth and jewel glow :
God's Love is sunlight to the good,
And Woman's pure as diamond sheen,
And Friendship's mystic brotherhood
In twilight beauty lies between.

WHEN Love was stricken with disgust
At the cold world's unnatu'ral sway,
He shook in scorn its golden dust
From his transparent feet away :
And sought, in pilgrim's weeds, a spot
For penance fit, lone, dark, and bare,
Where even Hope's wan bloom was not,—
He found my heart, and laid him there.

FROM THE PROVENÇALE.



OH ! thanks to those that with a hand so light
Proffer the fair their sweet unmeaning lays,
Else had I never praised my Love aright,
Singing “ her loveliness bemocks all praise.”
For had men deemed such flatteries true indeed,
Nor fondly lavisht on each favorite claimer,
My Lady must have mist her beauty’s meed,—
I am not insolent enough to name her.

AFTER NOVALIS.



IN thousand forms, Eternal Maid,
Has pious Art imagined Thee,
But never wert Thou so pourtrayed,
As once, that once, Thou cam'st to me.
I only know that since that sight
I take no thought of night or day,
And all the world's material might
Flees like a shamèd child away.
Thou badst me drink, and since full deep
I drained the cup thy hand had given,
A perfect rest, that was not sleep,
Past to my soul, and made it Heaven.

ON LADY C———,

IN DECLINING HEALTH.

GENTLY supported by the ready aid
Of loving hands, whose little work of toil
Her grateful prodigality repaid
With all the benediction of her smile,
She turned her failing feet
To the soft-pillowed seat,
Dispensing kindly greetings all the while.

Before the tranquil beauty of her face
I bowed in spirit, thinking that she were
A suffe'ring Angel, whom the special grace
Of God intrusted to our pious care,
That we might learn from her
The art to minister
To heavenly beings in seraphic air.

There seemed to lie a weight upon her brain,
That ever prest her blue-veined eyelids down,
But could not dim her lustrous eyes with pain,
Nor seam her forehead with the faintest frown ;
She was as she were proud,
So young, to be allowed
To follow Him who wore the thorny crown.

Nor was she sad, but over every mood,
To which her lightly-pliant mind gave birth,
Gracefully changing, did a spirit brood,
Of quiet gaie'ty, and serenest mirth ;
And thus her voice did flow,
So beautifully low,
A stream whose music was no thing of earth.

Woman divine ! ideal best-beloved,
Here was *thy* image realised to me ;
In sensible existence lived and moved
The vision of my sacred phantasy ;
Madonna ! Mary mine !
Her look, her smile, was thine,—
And gazing on that form, I worshipt Thee.

NAPLES, June, 1832.

GHAZELES.

—●—
1.

SISTER! I will go with Thee ;
How can I not go with Thee ?
What am I for, but to share
Thought, and joy, and woe with Thee ?
I have known the' unstainèd peace
Children only know—with Thee ;
I have watcht the chequered blooms
Of my fortune blow—with Thee ;
I must part the scanty hope
Our low fates bestow—with Thee ;
Wish I with the great to live,
With the wealthy? No! with Thee ;
Nature's hand has mated us,—
Who but I can go with Thee ?

II.

THERE are few to whom, expiring, I would say, Forget
me not ;

The busy world, the many-minded,—why should it forget
me not ?

I have never worn its honors, never won its open shame,
Never bent before it, never wooed it to forget me not ;
But if e'er my hand has wakened grateful hearts to yearn
to mine,

If I ever earned kind friendship, let those friends forget
me not ;

And for her who was and is my soul of soul—my life of
life—

'TWould be wicked doubt to ask it—Leila will forget me
not.

Then mayst *thou* of all remembrance—thou whose know-
ledge only sleeps

In the free-will of thy justice – Father—thou—forget me
not !

III.

WRITTEN AT AMALFI.

It is the mid-May Sun, that, rayless and peacefully
gleaming,
Out of its night's short prison, this blessed of lands is
redeeming ;
It is the fire evoked from the hearts of the citron and
orange,
So that they hang, like lamps of the day, translucently
beaming ;
It is the veinless water, and air unsoiled by a vapor,
Save what, out of the fullness of life, from the valley is
steaming ;
It is the olive that smiles, even he, the sad growth of the
moonlight,
Over the flowers, whose breasts triple-folded with odours
are teeming ;
Yes, it is these bright births, that to me are a shame
and an anguish,
They are alive and awake,—*I* dream, and know I am
dreaming ;

I cannot bathe *my* soul in this ocean of passion and
beauty,—

Not *one* dew-drop is on me of all that about me is
streaming ;

Oh ! I am thirsty for Life,—I pant for the freshness of
Nature,

Bound in the World's dead sleep—dried up by its trea-
cherous seeming.

IV.

TO ——— ———.



WHEREVER Beauty is, I find thee there,—
Through every veil and guise, I find thee there :
Where the low zephyr dreams among thick flowers,
Embalmer of sweet thoughts ! I find thee there ;
Where full cascades leap down with curvèd steps,
Form of essential Grace ! I find thee there ;
In the broad mirror of the summer-sea,
Crystal entire of Truth ! I find thee there ;
In the unshaded presence of the sun,
Illuminating Mind ! I find thee there ;
In the mild splendors which enjoy the night,
Radiance of gentlest Love ! I find thee there ;
In the ecstatic realms that Prayer reveals,
There, Humble Holiness ! I find thee there.



These lines may remind the German scholar of one of Göthe's most exquisite and most untranslatable Poems.

v.

MY own friend, my old friend !
Time's a soldier bold, friend !
Of his lofty prowess
Many a tale is told, friend !
Nations are his puppets,
To be bought and sold, friend !
He can mock the conqueror,
Raze his strongest hold, friend !
Fool the stern philosopher,
Win the miser's gold, friend !
But though earthly nature
Has so frail a mould, friend !
What the tyrant cannot do
Is to make *us* cold, friend !

VI.

I'VE a Friend, a staunch Friend ; listen, listen, Mary
mine ;
There's none such wherever Phœbus winds his airy line ;
When I rise at morn-time,—ere the grass his dewy
tears
Dries away, she meets me, beck'oning oft with wary sign,
That I tread discreetly, while she shows how round
about
With marigolds and violets she has pranked her dairy
fine,—
That the milk, fresh steaming, may be sweeter to my
lips,
Crowned with glowing blossoms,—so too is it, faery
mine ;
When at eve out-wearied I approach, she brings me
down
What her own white hands have prest—a flask of chary
wine.
There it is,—the nectar ! where then is the Friend I
mean ?
Where but here, beside me ? kiss me, bless me, Mary
mine.

vii.

SHADE not the light within thine eyes,
The wondrous light within thine eyes ;
The Sun is all too fierce to hold
Light such as that within thine eyes,—
Yet is the passion of his warmth
Less deep than that within thine eyes ;
The Moon is all too cold to wear
Light such as that within thine eyes,—
Yet is her flame less silver-clear
Than that which glows within thine eyes.
Thou art my Heaven ; my Sun and Moon
Are the mere light within thine eyes ;
Nature, that gave the world those orbs,
Gave me the light within thine eyes ;—
I, and I only, can repose
Within the light within thine eyes ;
Oh ! Leila, what would be my gloom,
Without the light within thine eyes ?

VIII.

ALL things once are things for ever ;
Soul, once living, lives for ever ;
Blame not what is only once,
When that once endures for ever ;
Love, once felt, though soon forgot,
Moulds the heart to good for ever ;
Once betrayed from childly faith,
Man is conscious man for ever ;
Once the void of life revealed,
It must deepen on for ever,
Unless God fill up the heart
With himself for once and ever :
Once made God and man at once,
God and man are one for ever.

FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE.



IF I could coldly sum the love
That we each other bear,
My heart would to itself disprove
The truth of what was there ;—
Its willing utterance should express
Nothing but joy and thankfulness.

Yet Friendship is so blurred a name,
A good so ill-discerned,
That if the nature of the flame
That in our bosoms burned
Were treasured in becoming rhymes,
It might have worth in after-times.

The Lover is a God,—the ground
He treads on is not ours ;
His soul by other laws is bound,
Sustained by other powers ;
We, children of a lowlier lot,
Listen, and understand him not.

Liver of a diviner life,
He turns a vacant gaze
Toward the theatre of strife,
Where we consume our days ;
His own, and that one other heart,
Form for his self a world apart :

A sphere whose sympathies are wings
On which he rests sublime,
Above the shifts of casual things,
Above the flow of time ;
How should he feel, how can he know
The sense of what goes on below ?

Reprove him not,—no selfish aim
Here leads to selfish ends ;
You might as well the infant blame
That smiles to grieving friends :
Could all thus love, and love endure,
Our world would want no other cure.

But few are the elect, for whom
This fruit is on the stem,—
And for that few an early tomb
Is open,—not for them,
But for their love ; for they live on,
Sorrow and shame ! when Love is gone :

They who have dwelt at Heaven's own gate,
And felt the light within,
Come down to our poor mortal state,
Indiffe'rence, care, and sin ;
And their dimmed spirits hardly bear
A trace to tell what once they were.

Fever and Health their thirst may slake
At one and the same stream ;
The dreamer knows not till he wake
The falsehood of his dream :
How, *while* I love thee, can I prove
The surer nature of *our* love ?

It is, that while our choicest hours
Are closed from vulgar ken,
We daily use our active powers,—
Are men to brother men,—
It is, that, with our hands in one,
We do the work that should be done.

Our hands in one, we will not shrink
From life's severest due,—
Our hands in one, we will not blink
The terrible and true ;
What each would feel a heavy blow
Falls on us both as autumn snow.

The simple unpretentious sway,
By which our hearts are ruled,
Contains no seed of self-decay ;
Too tempe'rate to be cooled,
Our Passion fears no blast of ill,
No winter, till the one last chill.

And even then no furious grief
Shall shake the mourner's mind,—
He will reject no small relief
Kind Heaven may leave behind,
Nor set at nought his bliss enjoyed,
When now by human fate alloyed.

TO A. S. O'B.

FROM FERRARA.



It is a happy thought, I ween,
That, with my heart and fancy free,
Though seas and nations lie between,
I still am side by side with thee.

Though strange in this illustrious land,
Distraught by many' a pleasant care,
One simple trace of thy dear hand
Begets me wings and takes me there.

I sit within thy small still room,
I feel thy low-embreathèd tone
Come towards me, in the evening gloom,—
I live for thee and thee alone.

And, where yon limes colossal bower
Draws out its long impleachèd aisle,
I walk with thee the noontide hour,
Listen thy laugh, and watch thy smile.

Thou too, from out the planet crowd,
Of which thou art the life and sun,
When answered jest and frolic loud
Goad the light moments as they run,—

Wilt send thy heart a silent way
On embassy of love to me,—
And trust ye, be it night or day,
I shall receive it royally.

Thus, tho' in outward space apart,
I see thee, hear thee, know thee true ;
For, verst in Friendship's sacred art,
The Spirit has its senses too.

A LAMENT.



I HEAR them upbraid you,—they mingle your name
With lightness and folly, and almost with shame ;
And they, who have croucht at the bend of your brow,
With familiar indiffe'rence prate of you now.

Where now is the fountain of beauty and joy,
That thrilled through the heart of the care-hating boy ?
With love, and with music, that fountain plays on,—
But the spirit, that baskt in its freshness, is gone.

Oh ! were it stern Science that led you away,
Or a flow of dark feeling that made you less gay,
I should mourn that so early the shadows were cast,
But the path *might* have led into sunlight at last.

Not so, now the world, with its gilding and glare,
Has bid you to pleasure, and prisoned you there ;
And the blazoned saloon, and the mirth-breathing hall,
And silver-sweet flatteries, hold you in thrall :

For the friends of your boyhood—the innocent few,
Whose hearts knew you well, and whose hearts you too
 knew,
From their home in your breast have been forced, one
 by one,—
And in that bleak place can I linger alone ?

I too must begone,—with those who have seen
The manifold promise of what you have been,
Though they who so loved will still gaze from afar,
If it be but to weep, when they see what you are.

THE FRIENDSHIP FLOWER.

WHEN first the Friendship-flower is planted
Within the garden of your soul,
Little of care or thought are wanted
To guard its beauty fresh and whole ;
But when the one empassioned age
Has full revealed the magic bloom,
A wise and holy tutelage
Alone can shun the open tomb.

It is not Absence you should dread,—
For Absence is the very air
In which, if sound at root, the head
Shall wave most wonderful and fair ;
With sympathies of joy and sorrow
Fed, as with morn and even dews,
Ideal coloring it may borrow
Richer than ever earthly hues.

But oft the plant, whose leaves unsere
Refresh the desert, hardly brooks
The common-peopled atmosphere
Of daily thoughts and words and looks ;
It trembles at the brushing wings
Of many' a careless fashion-fly,
And strange suspicions aim their stings
To taint it as they wanton by.

Rare is the heart to bear a flower,
That must not wholly fall and fade,
Where alien feelings, hour by hour,
Spring up, beset, and overshadow ;
Better, a child of care and toil,
To glorify some needy spot,
Than in a glad redundant soil
To pine neglected and forgot.

Yet when, at last, by human slight,
Or close of their permitted day,
From the sweet world of life and light
Such fine creations lapse away,—
Bury the relics that retain
Sick odours of departed pride,—
Hoard as ye will your memory's gain,
But let them perish where they died.

LEONORE.

A REST,—a sure and lowly rest,
For Leonore,—
She asks no more,
She prays not to be blest ;—
Go ye on a holy quest,
Where or how to find a rest
For Leonore.

Lay her on the front of Spring,
When the tipsy breezes sing,
Speeding on the primrose hours,
Singing aye a birthday song,
“ Merrily live, for ye live not long,”
To the budding trees and flowers ;
Go ye on another quest
Once more,—
The Spring-time has no rest
For Leonore ;

Would not a new-year's madrigal
Sound strangely at a funeral ?

When the air is full of heat,—
And' the winds' light feet
Hang languidly,—
Let her lie

On the Summer's throbbing breast ;
And if the Time's deep extasy
Can lull her not to rest,
Where is Nature's sorcery ?
For now that all is still,
Now that each bird is sleeping on
The wing of his companion,
That erst was chirping cheerily,
And' the brook goes on too wearily
To turn the cottage mill ;
Now, that ye might in pleasaunce say,
All things are as they died in May,
But God forbids them to decay ;
What seek ye more
For Leonore ?

Alas for her ! she cannot weep,
Alas for her ! she cannot sleep,

For her spirit ever seems
In a host of wavy dreams,
Tossing, tossing, to and fro,
In the fever and the glow,
Under which all other things
Drop their heavy wings :
She feels the hot air vibrating,—
She hears the silence whispering,—
She sees an agony of life,
In every mute and corpse-like feature
Of the lethargy of nature,
As when dead men walk the air,—
Mixing in a fearful strife
Forms that are and thoughts that were.
 Go ye on another quest
 Once more,—
 The pant of summer has no rest
 For wearied Leonore.

When the glazed and steady sky
Rests above the prisoned earth,
With the year about to die,
Or the new one from its birth
Gazing on the face of Time,
In a sullen, voiceless prime,—

Oh ! now and here
All, all is drear,
And numbing chill,
For good or ill ;
All memory is lost
I' the slumber of the frost.

Go ye not another quest
For Leonore,—
Go no more ;

Leave her here, and let her rest,
Like the bloom of steadfast snow,
Borne i' the year's first throe ;
The only flower in all the vale
That can tell no other tale,
But a legend sad and rude,
Full of cold and solitude,
Knowing nothing of the shade
Where its relics will be laid :

Here let her lie ;
And in the' uncovered noon of night,—
In the silver-gray moonlight,
Here let her die.

THE MEMORY OF LOVE.

RELIGIOUS Love ! it is most sure and true,
That Man, before he felt the dank night air
Of this our nether birth, thy kingdom knew,
And bathed his Spirit in the day-spring there.

Else could world-withered age and flippant youth,
Minds of unloving and unlovely mould,
Who hold the “ antient lie ” for solid truth,
And prize its wretched life-dross all as gold,—

Could these, the minions of the dust,—even these,
Descant of thee as a familiar name,—
Detect thy signs, revere thy mysteries,
And, godless else, adore thy altar-flame ?

And Poets too have been, who boldly own
They never felt thy influence o'er them shine,
But whose high Art has built thee many a throne,
Where thou canst fitly sit, confest divine.

Remember then, oh Pilgrim! and beware,
Thou, with that Memory for a master-key,
Wilt open Heaven, and be no alien there,—
For as thou hono'rest Love,—so will Love honor thee.

THE FLOWER-GARDEN.



O PENSIVE Sister! thy tear-darkened gaze
I understand, whene'er thou look'st upon
The Garden's gilded green and color'd blaze,
The gay society of flowers and sun.

Thou thinkest of the withe'ring that must come,
The quenching of this radiance all around,
The haste'ning change in Nature's merriest home,
The future blackness of the orphaned ground.

Thou thinkest too of those more precious blooms,
The firstling honors of thy Life's fresh field,
The childly feelings that have all their tombs,
The hopes of youth that now no odours yield :

Still many a blessed sense, in living glee,
 Waves its bright form to glorify thy breast,
But this fair scene's perverse morality
 Tells thee, they all will perish like the rest :

Yet pluck them, hurt them not; whate'er betides,
 Touch not with wilful force those flowers of thine,—
Let Death receive them his inviolate brides,
 They are the destined vestals of his shrine.

And if those children of the' insensate earth
 Go down in peace to a prolific grave,—
If Nature raises in continuous birth
 The plant whose present grace she will not save,—

So some deep-grounded root or visible seed,
 When these Heart-blossoms fade, may still remain,
In a new season of thy Being, decreed
 To rise to light and loveliness again.

WRITTEN AT ROME.

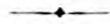
To search for lore in spacious libraries,
And find it hid in tongues to you unknown ;
To wait deaf-eared near swelling minstrelsies,
Watch every action, but not catch one tone ;—
Amid a thousand breathless votaries,
To feel yourself dry-hearted as a stone,—
Are images of that, which, hour by hour,
Consumes my heart, the strife of Will and Power.

The Beauty of the past before my eyes
Stands ever in each fable-haunted place,
I know her form in every dark disguise,
But never look upon her open face ;
O'er every limb a veil thick-folded lies,
Showing poor outline of a perfect grace,
Yet just enough to make the sickened mind
Grieve doubly for the treasures hid behind.

Thro' great memorials wande'ring to and fro,
Waves of old Time about me seem to roll,
Most like a tune heard somewhere long ago,
Whose sepa'rate notes have left upon my soul
Some footmarks as they past, and though I know
That memory's hardest toil can raise the whole
Into continuous being, nev'er again,
I still strive on as one in love with pain.—

O thou ! to whom the wearisome disease
Of Past and Present is an alien thing,
Thou pure Existence ! whose severe decrees
Forbid a living man his soul to bring
Into a timeless Eden of sweet ease,
Clear-eyed, clear-hearted,—lay thy loving wing
In Death upon me,—if that way alone
Thy great Creation-thought thou wilt to me make known.

MOMENTS. †



I LIE in a heavy trance,
With' a world of dream without me,
Shapes of shadow dance,
In wavering bands about me ;
But, at times, some mystic things
Appear in this phantom lair,
That almost seem to me visitings
Of Truth known elsewhere :
The world is wide,—these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

† A prayer in an hour of pain,
Begun in an undertone,
Then lowered, as it would fain
Be heard by the heart alone ;

A throb, when the soul is entered
By a light that is lit above,
Where the God of Nature has centered
The Beauty of Love.—
The world is wide,—these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

A look that is telling a tale,
Which looks alone dare tell,—
When' a cheek is no longer pale,
That has caught the glance, as it fell ;
A touch, which seems to unlock
Treasures unknown as yet,
And the bitter-sweet first shock,
One can never forget ;—
The world is wide, these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

A sense of an earnest Will,
To help the lowly-living,—
And a terrible heart-thrill,
If you' have no power of giving ;
An arm of aid to the weak,
A friendly hand to the friendless,
Kind words, so short to speak,
But whose echo is endless :

The world is wide, these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

The moment we think we have learnt
The lore of the all-wise One,
By which we could stand unburnt,
On the ridge of the seething sun :
The moment we grasp at the clue,
Long-lost and strangely riven,
Which guides our soul to the True,
And the Poet to Heaven.
The world is wide, these things are small,—
If they be nothing, what is there at all ?

THE MEN OF OLD.

I know not that the men of old
Were better than men now,
Of heart more kind, of hand more bold,
Of more ingenuous brow :
I heed not those who pine for force
A ghost of Time to raise,
As if they thus could check the course
Of these appointed days.

Still is it true, and over true,
That I delight to close
This book of life self-wise and new,
And let my thoughts repose
On all that humble happiness,
The world has since foregone,—
The daylight of contentedness
That on those faces shone !

With rights, tho' not too closely scanned,
Enjoyed, as far as known,—
With will by no reverse unmanned,—
With pulse of even tone,—
They from to-day and from to-night
Expected nothing more,
Then yesterday and yesternight
Had proffered them before.

To them was life a simple art
Of duties to be done,
A game where each man took his part,
A race where all must run ;
A battle whose great scheme and scope
They little cared to know,
Content, as men at arms, to cope
Each with his fronting foe.

Man now his Virtue's diadem
Puts on and proudly wears,
Great thoughts, great feelings, came to them,
Like instincts, unawares :
Blending their souls' sublimest needs
With tasks of every day,
They went about their gravest deeds,
As noble boys at play.—

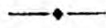


And what if Nature's fearful wound
They did not probe and bare,
For that their spirits never swooned
To watch the misery there,—
For that their love but flowed more fast,
Their charities more free,
Not conscious what mere drops they cast
Into the evil sea.

A man's best things are nearest him,
Lie close about his feet,
It is the distant and the dim
That we are sick to greet :
For flowers that grow our hands beneath
We struggle and aspire,—
Our hearts must die, except they breathe
The air of fresh Desire.

But, Brothers, who up Reason's hill
Advance with hopeful cheer,—
O ! loiter not, those heights are chill,
As chill as they are clear ;
And still restrain your haughty gaze,
The loftier that ye go,
Remembe'ring distance leaves a haze
On all that lies below.

THE WORTH OF HOURS.



BELIEVE not that your inner eye
Can ever in just measure try
The worth of Hours as they go by :

For every man's weak self, alas !
Makes him to see them, while they pass,
As through a dim or tinted glass :

But if in earnest care you would
Metre out to each its part of good,
Trust rather to your after-mood.

Those surely are not fairly spent,
That leave your spirit bowed and bent
In sad unrest and ill-content :

And more,—though, free from seeming harm,
You rest from toil of mind or arm,
Or slow retire from Pleasure's charm,—

If then a painful sense comes on
Of something wholly lost and gone,
Vainly enjoyed, or vainly done,—

Of something from your being's chain
Broke off, nor to be linkt again
By all mere Memory can retain,—

Upon your heart this truth may rise,—
Nothing that altogether dies
Suffices Man's just destinies :

So should we live, that every Hour
May die as dies the natural flower,—
A self-reviving thing of power ;

That every Thought and every Deed
May hold within itself the seed
Of future good and future need ;

Esteeming Sorrow, whose employ
Is to develope, not destroy,
Far better than a barren Joy.

THE LONG-AGO.



EYES which can but ill define
Shapes that rise about and near,
Through the far horizon's line
Stretch a vision free and clear :
Memories feeble to retrace
Yesterday's immediate flow,
Find a dear familiar face
In each hour of Long-ago.

Follow yon majestic train
Down the slopes of old renown,
Knightly forms without disdain,
Sainted heads without a frown ;
Emperors of thought and hand
Congregate, a glorious show,
Met from every age and land
In the plains of Long-ago.

As the heart of childhood brings
Something of eternal joy,
From its own unsounded springs,
Such as life can scarce destroy ;
So, remindful of the prime
Spirits, wande'ring to and fro,
Rest upon the resting time
In the peace of Long-ago.

Youthful Hope's religious fire,
When it burns no longer, leaves
Ashes of impure Desire
On the altars it deceives ;
But the light that fills the Past
Sheds a still diviner glow,
Ever farther it is cast
O'er the scenes of Long-ago.

Many a growth of pain and care,
Cumbe'ring all the present hour,
Yields, when once transplanted there,
Healthy fruit or pleasant flower ;
Thoughts that hardly flourish here,
Feelings long have ceased to blow,
Breathe a native atmosphere
In the world of Long-ago.

On that deep-retiring shore
Frequent pearls of beauty lie,
Where the passion-waves of yore
Fiercely beat and mounted high :
Sorrows that are sorrows still
Lose the bitter taste of woe ;
Nothing's altogether ill
In the griefs of Long-ago.

Tombs where lonely love repines,
Ghastly tenements of tears,
Wear the look of happy shrines
Thro' the golden mist of years :
Death, to those who trust in good,
Vindicates his hardest blow ;
Oh ! we would not, if we could,
Wake the sleep of Long-ago !

Tho' the doom of swift decay
Shocks the soul where life is strong,
Tho' for frailer hearts the day
Lingers sad and overlong,—
Still the weight will find a leaven,
Still the spoiler's hand is slow,
While the Future has its Heaven,
And the Past its Long-ago.

SIMPLE SOUNDS.

O POWER, whose organ is the tremu'lous air,
Thou that not only to the' accordant sense
Unfoldest all a world of harsh and fair,
But hast a far diviner influence,
Submitting to inscrutable control
The finest elements of human soul ;

O mystic Sound ! what heart can keep aloof,
If summoned to acknowledge thy bland sway,
As thou approachest in the golden woof
Of luscious harmonies serene or gay ?
But thou hast moods I would not honor less,
Thy simplest forms of moral kingliness.

How did my childish ecstasy burst out,
When first I found thy Echoes at my call !
What blithe caprice of whisper, song, and shout,
Woke the steep hill and challenged the long wall !
How we *did* laugh ! I needed from that day
Nor other playfellows nor other play.

Further in life, when thoughts and feelings slept
In my heart's tomb, some one particu'lar tone
Of common bells has stung me till I wept,
And rusht away, opprest by things foregone ;
For though the hours recalled be bright and glad,
Still earnest memory ever will be sad.

When late I changed the still unpeopled air
Of the clear South for this my mother clime,
I quivered with delight, as every where
Sweet birds in happy snatches hailed the prime ;
A throstle's twitter made old walks arise,
With lilac bunches dancing in my eyes.

What love we, about those we love the best,
Better than their dear voices ? At what cost
Would one not gather to an aching breast
Each little word of some whom we have lost ?

And oh ! how blank to hear, in some far place,
A voice we know, and see a stranger's face.

I never hold my truth to God more leal
Than when it thunders ; that monoto'nous roll
Has after-lightning potent to reveal
Many dark words on Faith's sin-shaded scroll :
Talk with a stormy sky, man ! prone to deem
That nothing *is*, because of thine own Dream.

And now within the hush of evening waves,
Cast by light force upon a shingly shore,
My Spirit rests ; the ruins and fresh graves
That strewed its earthy path here vex no more :
Rockt on the soothing surge, its life is all
One soft attraction and one mellow fall.

LIGHT.

FROM COUNT PLATEN.



LIGHT from Heaven downward beameth,
Light to Heaven upward streameth ;

Light, the symbol Mediator,
Between Creature and Creator.

There was Light, before the Sun
Or the Earth their lives begun ;

And thus the perfect Light of Deity
Became Creation's parent-mystery.

Ever wider, ever lighter,
The holy shafts of Light are cast ;
Ahriman himself, the Dark One,
Will be merged in light at last.

MUTABILITY.

I SAW two children intertwine
Their arms about each other,
Like the lithe tendrils of a vine
Around its nearest brother :
And ever and anon,
As gaily they ran on,
Each lookt into the other's face,
Anticipating an embrace.—
I markt those two, when they were men,
I watcht them meet one day,
They toucht each other's hands, and then
Each went on his own way ;
There did not seem a tie
Of love, the lightest chain,
To make them turn a linge'ring eye,
Or press the hand again.

This is a page in our life's book,
We all of us turn over ;
The web is rent,
The hour-glass spent,
And, oh ! the path we once forsook
How seldom we recover !

Our days are broken into parts,
And every fragment has a tale
Of the abandonment of hearts,
May make our freshest hopes turn pale ;
Even in the plighting of our troth,
Even in the passion of our oath,
A cold hard voice may seem to mutter,
“ We know not what it is we utter.”

WINTER ROSES.



YE Roses of November,
Ye are no joy to me ;
The roses I remember
Are other than ye be !
Your cordial kindred summer
Has gone by long before,
And Winter, the new-comer,
Is' a Lover fierce and frore.

At sight of ye I tremble,
As ye in this bleak air ;
I read a fearful symbol
In what ye are and were ;
How all that's best and fairest,
When past a petty reign,
To those, who hold them dearest,
Are Pain and only Pain.

Beauty is always Beauty,
Her essences divine
The Poet, in his duty,
May labor to combine ;
But Beauty wed to sorrow
Is sad, whate'er we say,—
Sad thinking for to-morrow,
Sad presence for to-day!

RETURNING DREAMS.

IN the lone silence of my later nights,
The dreams I dreamt in youth come back to me ;
Not a returning presence that affrights,—
Nor a mere play of hard-forced memory,—
But there is no reality which seems
To me so real as those repeated dreams.

I find, in such revivals of old joys,
An earnest of the unity that reigns
In this our inner life, an equipoise
To all our vacillating outward pains ;
A constant well, from which our souls updraw
Continuous Truth and undisturbèd Law.

If few to us, and far between, appear
The favored hours at which reverberate
These spiritual echoes, that from sphere
To sphere are sped by Power compassionate,
In Life's short pass, how rarely are we found
Just at the point where strikes the heavenly sound !

But unlike echoes among natural things,
That live in faintness and are breathed away,—
To ends most distant their reflection brings
Glories and bliss impervious to decay,
Fresh and refreshing as when first they come
From the Eternal Thought, which is their home.

As in that World of Dream, whose mystic shades
Are cast by still more mystic substances,
We oftentimes have an unreflecting sense,
A silent consciousness, of some things past,
So clear, that we can wholly comprehend
Others of which they are a part, and even
Continue them in action, though no stretch

Of after-memory can recognise

That we have had experience of those things,
Or sleeping or awake ;—

Thus in the dream,

Our Universal Dream, of Mortal Life,
The incidents of an anterior Dream,
Or, it may be, Existence (for the Sun
Of Being, seen thro' the deep dreamy mist,
Itself is dream-like), noiselessly intrude
Into the daily flow of earthly things ;
Instincts of Good,—immediate sympathies,
Places come at by chance, that claim at once
An old acquaintance,—single, random, looks,
That bare a stranger's bosom to our eyes ;
We *know* these things are so, we ask not why,
But act and follow as the Dream goes on.

Happy the many to whom Life displays
Only the flaunting of its Tulip-flower,
Whose minds have never bent to scrutinize
Into the madde'ning riddle of the Root,—
Shell within shell,—dream folded over dream,—
No heart, no kernel of essential Being,
For us to find, and feel that Truth is there !

THE MARVEL OF LIFE.

O LIFE ! how like the common-breathèd air,
Which is thy outward instrument, thou liest
Ever about us, with sustaining force,
In the calm current of our usual days
Unfelt, unthought of ; nay, how dense a croud
Float on upborne by thy prolific stream,
Eve'n to the ridges of the' eternal sea,
Spending profuse the passion of their mind
On every flower that gleams on either bank,
On every rock that bends its rugged brow,
Conscious of all things, only not of thee.
Yet some there are, who in their greenest youth,
At some rare hours, have known the dazzling light
Intolerable, that glares upon the soul,
In the mere sense of Being, and grown faint

With awe, and strive'n to press their folded hands
Upon their inner eyes, and bowed their heads,
As in the presence of a mighty Ghost,
Which they must feel, but cannot dare to see.
It is before me now, that fearful truth,
That single solitary truth, which hangs
In the dark heaven of our uncertainties,
Seen by no other light than its own fire,
Self-balanced, like the Arab Magian's tomb,
Between the inner and the outer World;—
How utterly the wretched shred of Time,
Which in our blindness we call Human Life,
Is lost with all its train of circumstance,
And appanage of after and before,
In this eternal present ; that we Are !
No When,—no Where,—no How,—but that we Are,—
And nought besides ;—Nor when our dazed sight,
Weaned from its first keen wonder, learns to fix
The surer and more reasonable gaze
Of calm concentrated philosophy
On this intense idea, have we gained
One instant's raising of the sacred veil,
One briefest glimpse into the sanctuary.—
We grasp at words, and find them meaningless,
Bind thoughts together that will not be bound,

But burst asunder at the very time
We hold them closest,—find we are awake
The while we seem to dream, and find we dream
The while we seem to be the most awake ;
And thus we are thrown on from sea to sea.
Can we take up the sparkles of choice light,
That dance upon the ruffled summer waters,
And make them up to one coherent sun ?
Can we transform the charred and molten dust
Into its elemental diamond ?
And, tho' thus impotent, we yet dare hope,
From this embasèd form, half earth, half heaven,
Of most imperfect fragmentary nature,
These scant materials of dethronèd power,
This tarnisht Beauty, marred Divinity,
To fabricate a comprehensive scheme
Of absolute Existence—to lay open
The knowledge of a clear concordant Whole,
And penetrate, with foully-scalèd eyes,
The total scope, and utmost distances,
Of the Creations of the Living God.

* * * * *

* * * * *

He was a bitter Mocker, that old Man
Who bade us "know ourselves," yet not unwise;
For though the science of our Life and Being
Be unattained and unattainable
By these weak organs, though the athlete mind,
Hardened by practice of unpausing toil,
And fed to manhood with robustest meats,
Never can train its sinews strong enough
To raise itself from off the solid ground,
To which the mandate of creating Will
Has bound it; though we all must patient stand,
Like statues on appointed pedestals,
Yet we may choose (since choice is given) to shun
Servile contentment or ignoble fear,
In the expression of our attitude;
And with far-straining eyes, and hands upcast,
And feet half raised, declare our painful state,
Yearning for wings to reach the fields of Truth,
Mourning for wisdom, panting to be free.

HAPPINESS.

BECAUSE the Few with signal virtue crowned,
The heights and pinnacles of human mind,
Sadder and wearier than the rest are found,
Wish not thy Soul less wise or less refined.
True that the small delights which every day
Cheer and distract the pilgrim are not theirs ;
True that, though free from Passion's lawless sway,
A loftier being brings severer cares.
Yet have they special pleasures, even mirth,
By those undreamt of who have only trod
Life's valley smooth ; and if the rolling earth
To their nice ear have many' a painful tone,
They know, Man does not live by Joy alone,
But by the presence of the power of God.

THE SAME.



A SPLENDOR amid glooms, a sunny thread
Woven into a tapestry of cloud,—
A merry child a-playing with the shroud
That lies upon a breathless mother's bed,—
A garland on the front of one new-wed,
Trembling and weeping while her troth is vowed,—
A school-boy's laugh that rises light and loud
In licensed freedom from ungentle dread ;
These are ensamples of the Happiness,
For which our nature fits us ; more and less
Are parts of all things to the mortal given,
Of Love, Joy, Truth, and Beauty. Perfect Light
Would dazzle, not illuminate, our sight,—
From Earth it is enough to glimpse at Heaven.

TO AN ENGLISH LADY,

WHO HAD SUNG A ROMAN BALLAD.

BLAME not my vacant looks ; it is not true,
That my discourteous thoughts did vainly stray
Out of the presence of your gentle lay,
While other eager liste'ners nearer drew,
Though sooth I hardly heard a note ; for you,
Most cunning songstress, did my soul convey
Over the fields of space, far, far away,
To the dear garden-land, where long it grew.
Thus, all that time, beneath the ilex roof.
Of an old Alban hill, I lay aloof,
With the cicala faintly clitte'ring near,
Till, as your song expired, the clouds that pass
Athwart the Roman plain, as o'er a glass,
Thickened, and bade the Vision disappear.

ON REVISITING CAMBRIDGE,

AFTER A LONG ABSENCE ON THE CONTINENT.



NOR few, nor poor in beauty, my resorts
In forein climes,—nor negligent or dull
My observation, but these long-left courts
I still find beautiful, most beautiful !
And fairly are they more so than before ;
For to my eye, fresh from a southern land,
They wear the colo'ring of the scenes of yore,
And the old faith that made them here to stand.
I paint the very students as they were,
Not the men-children of these forward days,
But mild-eyed boys just risen from their knees,
While, proud as angels of their holy care,
Following the symbol-vested priest, they raise
The full response of antique litanies.

THE SAME.

I HAVE a debt of my heart's own to Thee,
School of my Soul, old lime and cloister shade,
Which I, strange creditor, should grieve to see
Fully acquitted and exactly paid.
The first ripe taste of manhood's best delights,
Knowledge imbibed, while mind and heart agree,
In sweet belated talk on winter nights,
With friends whom growing time keeps dear to me,—
Such things I owe thee, and not only these :
I owe thee the far beaco'ning memories
Of the young dead, who, having crost the tide
Of Life where it was narrow, deep, and clear,
Now cast their brightness from the further side
On the dark-flowing hours I breast in fear.

ON COWPER'S GARDEN AT OLNEY.

FROM this forlornest place, at morn and even,
Issues a voice imperative, " Begone,
All ye that let your vermin thoughts creep on
Beneath the' unheeded thunders of high Heaven ;
Nor welcome they, who, when free grace is given
To flee from usual life's dominion,
Soon as the moving scene or time is gone,
Return, like penitents unfitly shriven.
But ye who long have wooed the memory
Of this great Victim of sublime despair,
Encompast round with evil as with air,
Yet crying, God is good, and sinful he,—
Remain, and feel how better 'tis to drink
Of Truth to Madness eve'n than shun that fountain's
brink."

TO QUEEN VICTORIA,

ON A PUBLIC CELEBRATION.

How art Thou calm amid the storm, young Queen !
Amid this wide and joy-distracted throng ?
Where has the range of life-experience been
To keep thy heart thus equable and strong ?
Can the secluded cold which may belong
To such high state compose thy noble mien,
Without the duteous purpose not to wrong
The truth of some Ideal spirit-seen ?

Perchance the depth of what I boldly askt
None know—nor I, nor Thou.

Yet let us pray

That Thou, in this exceeding glory maskt,
Be not to loss of thy true self beguiled ;
Still able at thy Maker's feet to lay
The living, loving, nature of a child !

THE GRECIAN YOUTH*.

THERE was a youth, who had drunk deep of lore,
And loved Religion, Truth, and Poesy,
And to that triune power had bent the knee,
Humble in wisdom,—happy to adore;
That blessed Youth the mystic Spirit bore
To Sais, its especial sanctuary;
He raised the veil, but what he there did see
None know; tho' now he was not as before;
There was a lighted beauty on his brow,
And on his lips a calm contented smile;—
On earth he sojourned but a little while,
And the world called him madman in her scoff;
Mad too he was, if madness it can show,
To live the Spirit's life—nor shake the body off.

* For the development of this idea on the other and darker side, see
“Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais” of Schiller.

ON ALFRED OF ENGLAND.

Alfred judged, and we have his own words before us grounded on such judgment, that it is better to permit the continuance of a defective law, than to destroy the foundation upon which all laws depend,—respect for established authority,—which sudden changes, even for the better, are apt to undermine.

PALGRAVE.

THERE rose, from out a most discordant age,
A mind attuned to that slow harmony,
With which the Former of Humanity
Unfolds his book of will, from page to page.
War, with that gene'rous passion, he did wage,
Which was the soul of Christian chivalry,—
But *governing*, his wise humility
Against high Heaven threw down no ventu'rous gage.
He knew, how staidly moves the Spi'rit of Law,
Even as the dial-shade,—that men with awe
May recognise the one law-giving hand ;
And thus the Ruler, whom his own proud will
Urges unbridled, be' it for good or ill,
Brings on himself like shame, and misery on the land.

TO WILLIAM PENN.

“IN a large room,” thy SPIRIT’S feet were set*,
In space which is not space, illimitable,—
Living the Life which is ineffable,
Being a Feeling, not a Thought ; while yet
Bound to the body, in the rack and fret,
Turmoil and striving, Thou wert capable
Of rendering great ideas palpable,
In actual forms, which men can ne’er forget.
Thus did’st Thou live Religion,—thus the scroll
Of God, the visible Bible, was unfurled
Before Thee, while the Sun of Deity glowed,
And all the shapes of Truth, reflected, showed,
On the immacu’late tablet of thy soul,
Through the “dark chamber” of this dismal world †.

* Psalm, xxxi. 9.

† Camera Oscura.

TO CHARLES LAMB.

THEE I would think one of the many Wise,
Who in Eliza's time sat eminent,
To our now world, his Purgatory, sent
To teach us what true English Poets prize.
Pasquant froth and forein galliardize
Are none of thine; but, when of gay intent,
Thou usest staid old English merriment,
Mannerly mirth, which no one dare despise.
The scoffs and girds of our poor critic rout
Must move thy pity, as amidst their mime,
Monk of Truth's Order, from thy memories
Thou dost updraw sublime simplicities,
Grand Thoughts that never can be wearied out,
Showing the unreality of Time.

TO A CERTAIN POET.

AT Beauty's altar fervent acolyte,
And favored candidate for priestly name,
In object as in force adore aright,
Nor waste one breath of thy rare gift of flame ;
Nature, Artistic Form, Music,—all these
Are shapes where partial Beauty deigns to lie,
And mediate, as with types and images,
Between frail hearts and perfect Deity.
From Thee a purer faith is due,—to find
The Beauty' of Life,—the Melody of Mind,—
Which the true Poet's quest never eludes :
Speed Thou Philosophy's straight-onward flight,
Aiming thy wings at that serenest height,
Where Wordsworth stands, feeding the multitudes.

FROM GÖTTE.



DEMAND not by what road or portal
Into God's City thou art come ;
But where thou tak'st thy place as mortal,
Remain in peace, and make thy home.

Then look around thee for the Wise ;
Look for the Strong, who there command ;—
Let Wisdom teach thee what to prize ;
Let Power direct and brace thy hand.

If, doing all that should be done,
Faithful and calm the State approve thee,
Know, thou wilt gain the hate of none,
And many will rejoice to love thee.

HONOR the greeting of a stranger's hand !
Prize it, as if it were an antient friend's :
Though, after some short words, you say, Farewell !
You going East, he West,—path facing path,—
Yet, after many years, at some strange hour,
If your ways cross, you cry, with sudden joy,
“ Yes—it is he ! 'Twas there we met ; ”—as if
So many a toilsome day o'er land and sea,
So many an orbit of the' unresting Earth,
That time and this had never lain between.

Then talk with fair exchange, share all your gains,
And let old sympathies be wove anew :
The first fresh greeting's worth a thousand others ;
So meet all greetings with a kind return.

FROM THE "BOOK OF SAYINGS,"

IN GÖTHE'S "WEST-EASTERN DIVAN."



To one, who in most evil days is born,
All better days will be for grief or scorn.

Why lapse my hours so wearily away?
Life may be short, but, oh! how long the day!
Still onward yearns the heart, still strives to go;
An' it be heaven-ward, who can rightly know?
But forward, forward, is its ceaseless range,
As if it wisht its very self to change;
And then to some best-loved one's breast it flies,
And rests in unreflecting Paradise,
Till the life-whirlpool drives it forth again,
At one sad point, one only to remain,—
When, all desire, all disappointment, past,
It leaves the struggle, self-befooled at last.

If I am to show you this neighbourhood,
You must mount these steps for the view to be good.

He who holds a double mind
Will have his Conscience poorly kept ;
A house with two of womankind
Will never be so nicely swept.

My lot on Earth, how grand ! how fair a soil,
Time my Possession,—Time my Field of toil.

If you would not be robbed of each whit of your pelf,
Keep your gold, and your path, and your faith to
yourself.

Be it your unerring rule
Ne'er to contradict a fool ;
For if Folly dare but brave you,
All your Wisdom cannot save you.

Ye Fools, esteeming in your proper fate
Some special meaning,—what are You or I ?
If Islam to One God be consecrate,
Parts of One Islam must we live and die.

For what am I most thankful, when at Prayer ?
That Allah parts our Knowledge and our Woes :
Would not each patient utterly despair,
Knew he his ill as the Physician knows ?

The silent man for all the world need never care a
feather,
The Man beneath the covert Tongue is hidden al-
together.

How could you behave in so careless a way,
When Fortune came into your house the' other day ?
I don't think the Lady could take it *so* ill,
For she's been often since of her own free will.

Many a light the Orient throws
O'er the midland waters brought ?
He alone who Hafiz knows,
Knows what Calderon has thought.

On the immoveable enduring land,
The tide of Passion vents its rage in vain ;
With pearls of poesy it sows the strand,
And this for Life is surely glorious gain.

All who have strive'n to earn a Hero's fame
Must with delight a Hero praise and name ;
He, who the heats and chills of Life has known,
Can know the worth of Man—and he alone.

Writing, rhyming, night and day,
That this displeases me, is true ;
Who chase all Poetry away
From our poor Earth?— You, Poets, you.

THE WEARY SOUL.

MY soul is wasted with trouble and toil,
The evening of Life is damp and chill,—
She would go back and rest awhile,
She can go back whene'er she will,—
For' the Poet holds the Past in fee,
That shadowy land is all his own,
And He, not led by Memory,
But as a man that walks alone
In gardens long familiar, knows
What spots afford the best repose.

Surely she will not wander far,—
Twilight is coming with never a star ;
Why may she not return where stands,
Broadly towards the weste'ring sun,
That proud building of hearts and hands,
Castle and Palace all in one,

Over the portal named at length,
“Successful Manhood’s place of strength?”
There she may traverse court and hall,
Up to her favo’rite turret tall;
She may recline her aching head
On her ancestral purple bed,
There, where at eve so oft she lay,
I’ the deep-embrasured window-bay,
Giving her vision open reign
Over the chequered world of plain—
Of hues that rest and hues that pass,
Sunset and autumn and tinted glass;
While the buck’s clear bell and the cattle’s low,
And every sound that is loud below,
Were melted into one murmur soft
Ere they could reach that couch aloft.

Witness of that triumphant scene!
Little you know what doom has been:—
How at a blow the heavens were split,
Words on the wall spontaneous writ,
As with a pen of burning brass,
“Vanitas, omnia Vanitas:”—
How Disappointment bared her hand,
Vivid and red as the levin brand,

Struck on the tower's sublimest crown,
Shattered the sturdiest buttress down,—
Till the poor Soul would fain have died
'Mid her annihilated pride.
Speed her along, tho' night be drear,—
Night be her cover, for none is here ;
Seek her a rest where'er you may,
Not in this shelterless decay !

There is a bower, a way-side bower,
Rich with brede of berry' and flower,—
Fair to dwell in and behold
How the green is turning gold,
Till the leafy screen repeat
All the light without the heat :
Music comes not here and there,
Does not fill, but is, the air :
Perfumes delicate and fine,
Flower of orange, flower of vine,
Take their place, without pretence,
In the harmony of sense ;
Where the floating spirit dreams,
Fed by odours, sounds, and gleams,
Of this royal region hight,
" Youth's dominion of delight."

Why then farther? why not here?
Soul of sorrow, Mind of fear!
Rest, as thou wert wont to rest,
On the swell of Nature's breast.
Hear that voice in angel's frame,
Singing, " Youth is still the same;
Cheery faces glimpsing round,—
Limber feet on mossy ground;—
Circumstance, the God of clay,
We have fairly laught away,
And a power of other face,
Hope, is seated in his place.
Enter, all that come from far,
Poor and naked as ye are;
Very breath is here divine,—
Bacchus has no need of wine!"

" Friends!" the tearful soul replies,
" Keep, oh! keep your Paradise!
Once I gained your happy place,
Ardent in the healthy race,
One of many braced together,
Comrades of the way and weather;
Now alone I falter by,—
Youth's the same,—but what am I?"

Just as sweet, as free from cares,
Are your smiles,—but are not *theirs* :
When the lips I prest of old
Lie beneath the sullen mould ;
When the voices I have known
In hosannas like your own
Answer to my yearning call,
Thin and feeble, if at all ;
When the golden locks are grey,
That made sunshine all my day ;
When my fibres fall together
In your genial summer-weather ;—
How can I repose an hour
In the graces of your bower ?
How should I take up my rest,
As a strange unnatu'ral guest,
In this home of truth, in this
My retreat of ancient bliss ?
Blasts of death-impregnate air
Would, with all the flowers, be there,—
Storms thro' all the blue be spread
In thick battalia o'er my head ;
Pallid looks of friendships broken,
Phantom words unwisely spoken,

Thoughts of love and self-reproof
Mingled in a fearful woof,—
Wishes, when not wisht in vain,
Only realised for pain,—
Things ye could not hear or see
Would be all my company !”

Disheartened spirit ! thou art then
In vain distinct from common men,
If all thy weary quest of mind
No true abiding-place can find,
Whose charms the busy life subdue,
And lure it from the outer view !
No region of thy mortal lot
Where Peace is native to the spot,
Ready to greet, when care-begone,
Imagination's pilgrim son.

Yet onward ;—it is well to stray
Along this bleak and homeless way,
Till thou canst raise thy conscious eyes
Where Childhood's Atalantis lies,
And recognise that idyl scene,
Where all mild creatures, void of awe,
Amid field-flowers and mountains green,
Fulfil their being's gentle law.

They will not fear thee ; safe they dwell
Within this armless citadel,
Embastioned in the self-defence
Of self-regardless innocence :
On Sin or Sorrow's bosom lingers
Each infant head in slumbers bland,—
Secure the tender tiny fingers
Enclasp the dark and withered hand.

Abysms of thought and sense must be
Between those simple souls and thee ;
But as the parent is beguiled
Into the nature of the child,
So mayst thou, tho' an alien here,
By careful duty take thy part
In all the feelings that endear
The kingdom of the virgin heart.

And thou wilt taste once more the rills
Fresh gushing from the' eternal hills,
And feel delight in living air
Without research of when and where ;
And hear the birds their song dispense
With free descant, on branch and wing,
Careless of other audience
Than God who made and bade them sing.

Till haply pausing some noon-day
Amid the faery people's play,
Along thy limbs the stony sleep
That rounds our life shall calmly creep,
And thou from Present and from Past
And things to come at once be freed,
To rest for aye, or wake at last
In God's own arms, a child indeed.

THE COMBAT OF LIFE.



Ce n'est pas la victoire qui fait le bonheur des nobles cœurs,—c'est le combat.

MONTALEMBERT.



WE have come out upon the field of Life,
To war with Evil ; by some mightier power
Than Memory can embrace, or Reason know,
We were enlisted into this great strife,
And led to meet that unknown Enemy :
Yet not like men brought blinded to a wood,
Who, looking round them, where a hundred paths
All undistinguish'd lead a hundred ways,
Tormented by that blank indifference,
Rather sit down and die than wander on,—
Not thus, but with a tablet clear and sure,
(Obscure in this alone, that it is graven
On mortal hearts by an eternal hand),
An ever-present Law, within our Being,

Which we must read whether we will or no,
We are placed here and told the way to go.
The Boy, who feels his foot upon the plain,
And his young fingers clinging to the sword,
For the first time—how loudly he proclaims
The faith of his ingenuous chivalry !
“ What is to me that proudly-fronting force ?
Am I not brave and strong ? Am I not here
To fight and conquer ? Have I not around
A world of comrades, bound to the same cause,
All brave as I—all led by the same chief,
All pledged to Victory ? Who dares to fear ?
Who dares to doubt ? Is not the very pulse,
That drives my spirit onward, as a Voice
Hailing my glory ?—Yes, the Power of Ill
Shall quail before the virtue of my arm,
And hostile darts fall pointless from my shield.”
Poor youthful Heart ! poor noble Self-deceit !
Weak-winged Aspirant !—Step with me aside,
’Tis for a moment,—mount this little hill,—
Tell me and tell thyself what see’st Thou now.
Look East and West, and mark how far extends
This vainly mockt, this haughtily defied,
This Might so easily to be laid low !
There is no eminence on this wide space,

So high that thou from it canst e'er behold
A clear horizon : dark is all the space,
Black with the masses of that Enemy ;
There is no point where Light can penetrate
Those densely-banded Legions,—the green plain
Shines through no interval. Brave though thou art,
My Boy, where is thy trust in Victo'ry now !
Now gaze below, gaze on that waving crowd,
The marshalled army of Humanity,
From which thou art come out,—Loyal thou art,
My Boy ; but what avails thy feeble Truth,
When, as thou see'st, of the huge multitude,
The still succeeding myriads there arrayed
For fight, how few, how miserably few,
Not only do not fervently work out
Their Soldier-duty, but whose craven souls
Do not pass over to the very Foe,
And, mingling with his numbers numberless,
Against their brethren turn unnatu'ral arms,—
Or else of honest wills at first, like thine,
After the faint resistance of an hour,
Yield themselves up half-willing prisoners,
Soon to be won by golden-guileful tongues,
To do blithe service in the cause of Sin ?
Surely amid this general faithlessness,

This common treason, where Desertion takes
So sure a method, so distinct a form,
That it may rather seem itself a Law
Than the infraction, where the wonder is
That those are loyal, not that these rebel,—
Surely if *we*, who have our hearts awake
To this most dreadful Truth, we who have learnt
That Evil is a force, which when we meet
In open battle, we are as a rush
Before the whirlwind, cautiously retire
To some deep-hidden cleft where'er we deem
We are best sheltered from his poisoned touch,
And there in calm but tearful hopelessness,
Mourning the cureless Ago'ny of our world,
Crouch in the dust and wait until the end,
It were a bitter judgment and untrue,
To brand us cowards, and our deeds a crime.
But though the weakness of our human heart
May thus be made most safe and innocent,
Yet there are some to whom a strength is given,
A Will, a self-constraining Energy,
A Faith which feeds upon no earthly hope,
Which never thinks of Victo'ry, but content
In its own consummation, combatting
Because it ought to combat (even as Love

Is its own cause and cannot have another),
And conscious that to find in martyrdom
The stamp and signet of most perfect life
Is all the science that mankind can reach,
Rejoicing fights, and still rejoicing falls.
It may be that to Spirits high-toned as these
A revelation of the end of Time
Is also granted ; that they feel a sense
Giving them firm assurance, that the foe
By which they must be crushed (in Death well-won
Alone to find their freedom) in his turn
Will be subdued, though not by such as They.
Evil, which is the King of Time, in Time
Cannot be overcome, but who has said
That Time shall be for ever ? Who can lay
The limits of Creation ? Who can know
That Realm and Monarch shall not sink together
Into the deep of blest Eternity,
And Love and Peace be all the Universe ?

HER heart is sick with thinking,
O' the misery of her kind,
Her mind is almost sinking,
That once so buoyant mind ;—
She cannot look before her
On the' evil-haunted way,—
Uphold her, oh ! restore her
Thou Lord of Night and Day !—
She cries, “ These things confound me,
They settle on my brain,
The very air around me
Is universal Pain.
The earth is damp with weeping,
Rarely the sun shines clear
On any but those sleeping
Upon the quiet bier.

I envy not hard hearts, but yet
 I would I could *sometimes* forget ;
 I would, tho' but for moments, look
 With comfort into Nature's book,
 Nor read that everlasting frown,
 Whose terror bows me wholly down.
 I cannot meet each pang I see
 With gratefulness that not on *me*
 Has fallen that rod,
 And make my fellow's agony
 The measure of my love to God.
 I bear an earnest Christian faith ;
 I never shrunk at thought of death ;
 I know the raptu'rous light of Heaven,
 To man's unscalèd vision given ;—
 My spirit is not blind ; but when
 The tortures of my brother men,
 The famine of gray hairs,
 The sick-beds of the poor,
 Life's daily stinging cares
 That croud the proudest door,
 The tombs of the long-loved,
 The slowly-broken heart,
 Self-gloated power unmoved
 By Pity's tende'rest art,

Come thronging thick about me,
Close in the world without me,—
How should I not despond?
How can I stretch my sight so far
As where things blest and holy are?
My mortal nature is too frail
To penetrate the sable veil,—
I cannot *see* beyond !”

THE PAST.



THE Past—the Past !—it has a tolling sound,
That solemn syllable, which calls to mind
The prison of the Present rising round,
And all the bonds that Time has power to bind.

Sounds, sights,—all else the means of sense impart,—
Seem to arouse to grief or joy in vain,
While still it clanks upon the captive heart,
That ever-moving, never-lengthe'ning, chain.

Is there no art that can an echo make,
To mock the splendid harmonies gone by ?
No charm that can the long-dead hours awake,
In ghost-like silence and solemnity ?

Alas ! tho' Memory, with her wilful wand,
Can shadow forth a faint and vapid show,
What boots the colorless unmeaning band ?
'Tis but a dream,—we know it to be so.

Of all our spiritual elements—of all
Those powers by which we feel ourselves to be—
Is there not *one* that can elude the thrall,
True to itself, and as its Author free ?

Have we no heritage of Father-land ?
No ray immortal as the Parent Sun ?
No heaven-armed force, that can undaunted stand
Guarding its own eternal garrison ?

Yes, we have that which lives a deathless life,
No meagre phantom, spawned by human will,
But strong to meet the Tyrant in the strife ;
Time has no rule o'er what he cannot kill.

The feelings which the Heart has raised to birth,
That holy mother never will disclaim ;
She is no hireling minister of earth ;
They are no bastard forgers of her name.

Memorial flashes, transient as intense,
A spirit darting through material night,
Like lightning felt within the vivid sense,
Yet seeming all too rapid for the sight.

How we have joyed, when all our mind was joy,
How we have loved, when love was all our law,
Lookt with half envy on the rising boy,
And thought of manhood with religious awe.

How we delighted in a thrice-sung song,
A wilding's blossom, or a speckled stone,
And how we numbered o'er the starry throng,
And chose the brightest to be called our own.

Or, when young Passion to excess had ranged,
How conscience met it with her sacred string,
And how we marvelled, what to frowns had changed
The red-rose smiles that tinted every thing.

How, when at first upon the fatal shore,
Liste'ning the murmu'rings of the waves of sin,
A shive'ring chill came over us, before
We bared our tender limbs and glided in.

And when perchance some random bird obscene
Flew screaming by, and warned us where we stood,
With palsied feet, we turned us back to lean,
Resisting those who urged us to the flood.

Such thoughts can never die ; the fire once kindled
Lies smouldering in the ashes dusty cove ;
Tho' one by one the tremulous sparks have dwindled,
A flame will burst in times we wot not of.

THE WORLD'S EXILE.



WELL, I will tell you, kind adviser,
Why thus I ever roam
In distant lands, nor wish to guide
My footsteps to the fair hill-side
Where stands my sacred home.

My home ! I seem to write that word,
In characters more clear
Than other words,—more slowly round
I draw my pen, to keep the sound
Still ling'ring in my ear.

For were my wearied life allowed
To choose that quiet bourne,
I should be met by straining eyes,
Welcoming tears, and grateful sighs,
To hallow my return.

But between me and that blest place,
There lies a bar, I feel,
More hard to pass, more girt with awe,
Than any power of injured law,
Or front of bristling steel,—

Or the proud world's anathema,
Or high imperial ban ;
I know it would be sacrilege
For me to touch that threshold's edge,—
I am an unclean man !

Not that, in things of Man's esteem,
I bear a mark of shame,
Wealth fairly won, and never turned
To sordid use or wrong, has earned
My honorable name.

But where has been my walk of life ?
Have I not grown half grey
Within the lazar house, and there
Have fed upon the' envenomed air,
Unconscious day by day ?

How long ago the poiso'nous rain
Distilled its deadly cold,
Upon my warm and panting youth,
That had no instinct but for truth,
No thought of self or gold !

How the hard leprous scales defiled
The bloom so fresh before,
How soon they taught my virgin eyes
To' unlearn the glorious mysteries
They saw so clear of yore !

And in their place came vexèd thoughts,
And hopes without a goal,
Unjust regards, and false esteems,
And worship of fantastic dreams,
To paralyse my soul.

Perchance, if I were placed once more
Within the antient pale
Of Home and homely things, once more
Beheld beside the rustic door
The bowery rose down-trail,—

And saw the bed at whose low side
I prayed, a thankful boy,
Where I have read, by stealthy light,
Some marve'llous tale, till past midnight,
In deep and trembling joy ;

The casement too, with light wood latch,
Where 'twas my happy wont
To push the ivy half away,
And let the uncheckt moon-stream play
Over my thirsty front ;

And when I felt a parent's kiss
Lie warm upon my cheek,—
Such sympathies so long foregone
Would make, in their sweet guerison,
The veriest savage meek.

The passion of that influence
Could not be vain to me,
The tide of love would be so strong,
I might perchance be borne along,
And be one moment free.

That could not last,—the mammon-King
Would be indeed too blind,
Thus to give up his long-won prey,
And loose the chains, in one short day,
It took him years to bind.

The heart, that with its luscious cates
The world has fed so long,
Could never taste the simple food
That gives fresh virtue to the good,
Fresh vigor to the strong.

What witchery, to a blunted spirit,
Can give the rapid sense
Of all that's true, and just, and kind,
And beautiful, that lights the mind
Of dauntless innocence?

The very health of these pure lives,
To my distempered sight,
Would wear a rude unseemly guise,—
Oh! shame that darkness dare despise
The Ministers of light!—

I could not join their honest mirth,
Nor share their artless plays,
Each earnest laugh would come to me,
Freited with bitte'rest mockery,
Out of my early days.

The plain old songs, all known by heart,
The merry-chorust round,
The' imperfect notes, that childhood sings
For its own glee, would now be things
Of faint and rapid sound.

The evening hymn, when every voice
After our father prayed,
Oldest with youngest richly blent,
Followed the simple instrument
My gentle Mother played.

That herald of their happy rest,
Closing their happy day,
Would chase from me all thought of sleep,—
Alas ! I might not even weep,
For' the bliss I' had thrown away.

But discontent and dark unrest
Would thicken all the air,
Envy, of thwarted conscience born,
Envy, that cloaks itself in scorn,
Would haunt me every where.

I might blaspheme the holy joys
From which my soul is riven,
And wroth to find my heart so dumb,
While theirs were sweetly-voiced, become
A Demon in that heaven.

At last, I feel, I might grow mad,
For my distorted brain
Would faint beneath the hideous rack—
Force me in ten-fold misery back
To the waste world again.

Then let me linger where I am,
An exile if you will,—
But, Friend, remember, if I flee
To my old home, I there must be
A greater exile still.

ON MY BOYISH LETTERS.



Look at the leaves I gather up in trembling,—
Little to see, and sere, and time-bewasted,
But they are other than the tree can bear now,
For they are mine !

Deep as the tumult in an archèd sea-cave,
Out of the Past these antiquated voices
Fall on my heart's ear ; I must listen to them
For they are mine !

Whose is this hand that wheresoe'er it wanders,
Traces in light words thoughts that come as lightly ?
Who was the king of all this soul-dominion ?
I ? Was it mine ?

With what a healthful appetite of spirit,
Sits he at Life's inevitable banquet,
Tasting delight in every thing before him !
 Could this be mine ?

See ! how he twists his coronals of fancy,
Out of all blossoms, knowing not the poison,—
How his young eye is mesht in the enchantment !
 And it was mine !

What, is this I ?—this miserable complex,
Losing and gaining, only knit together
By the' ever-bursting fibres of remembrance,—
 What is this mine ?

Surely we are by feeling as by knowing,—
Changing our hearts, our being changes with them ;
Take them away,—these spectres of my boyhood,
 They are not mine.

THEY tell me I have won thy love,—
That if there be
One man most blest all men above,
Then I am he ;
I answer not, resolved no more
To linger here,
And they have bitter words in store
To taint thine ear.

Did they not mark me dread to speak
When thou wert by ?
Did they not watch my quivering cheek,
My streaming eye ?
And can they fable none the less
That I disdain
A gift, whose very preciousness
Is all my pain ?

'Tis true, that when that fatal hour
 Did first disclose
 The myste'ry of my willess power
 O'er thy repose,
 I felt it was the' ordained one
 That tie to sever,
 That only then it could be done,
 For once and ever !

I shall not see thy ^{na} motive grace
 Before me play,
 I shall not look upon thy face
 One other day !
 And yet I swear that I am free
 From bond or vow ;
 What stands betwixt my soul and thee ?
 Oh ! ask not Thou.

Time was, when I too had my part
 Of wealth divine,
 A simple, free, and plastic heart
 Almost like thine,
 When lightened sorrow floated up
 And died in tears,
 And easy joy o'erflowed the cup
 Of eighteen years.

If fate had then let cross our ways,
 Thou wouldst have been
The Una of my nights and days,—
 My spirit's Queen ;—
Thou wouldst have led me glad and pure
 As thy white lamb ;
How dare I match this portraiture
 With what I am ?

It seems to me, as if that time,
 And I who wore
Its aspect of delight sublime,
 Were nothing more
Than visions, which poetic sloth
 So oft enjoys,—
As if the Scene and Man were both
 Mere fancy's toys :

It may be that some help may come
 To my soul's need,
My pilgrim thoughts may find a home
 In some new creed ;
But thou, whose mind has never gone
 One dream astray,—
Couldst thou be my companion,
 That peri'lous way ?

Then I must check my words that flow
 Too fast and far ;
For worlds I would not thou shouldst know
 How such things are !
Thou wilt not change, Thou wilt remain
 Serene and sure,—
The touch of Time may well refrain
 From thing so pure.

And now that I have closed the strife,
 And view once more
My future of ungenial life
 Spread out before,—
To have found favor in thy sight
 Will still remain
A riv'er of thought, that full of light
 Divides the plain.

THE CURSE OF LIFE.

ALL that flesh doth cover,
Souls of source sublime,
Are but slaves sold over
To the Master Time,
To work out their ransom for the antient crime.

Some go meet the morrow
With industrious will,—
Others toil in sorrow,
Though their hands be still ;
Man must toil for good or he shall toil for ill.

Grasping at one pleasure,
We let others fall ;
Yet how scant the measure
If we sum them all,—
Honey-drops scarce tasted in a sea of gall.

Did but tears and sighs
Teach our minds to see,
With clear-piercing eyes,
Into Heaven's decree,
By this time, how wise this world of ours would be !

Knowledge worn by sadness
Grows too faint to rise,—
Anguish fathers madness,—
Labor brutifies ;
If high feelings live, the Man a Martyr dies.

Sleep of freshest childhood
Hears the voice of doom ;—
Rambling in the wild wood,
Culling every bloom,
Tender brows are chilled by mist from out the tomb.

Gazing on Creation
With a first-love's eye,
Panting exaltation
Sinks into a sigh,—
For we learn so soon that what we love must die.

Then we try to smother
The Love-fire in our heart ;
Nature, our sweet Mother,
Can no balm impart,
For she too is sick with all the self-same smart.

She would fain relieve us,
Fain our grief beguile,—
She cannot deceive us
By her outward smile,
For we know that Death torments her all the while.

In the green bud's bosom
There is secret pain,
Bees to the same blossom
Come not back again,—
Waters weep, that seem to sing a happy strain*.

The Gem of Love was shattered
Long before our birth,
Sparkles still are scattered
Over the broad Earth,—
Which some seek in vain, tho' some know not their worth.

* We know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.—ST. PAUL.

Some may find and hold them,
Never to let go,
Hearts that would enfold them
In their vital glow,—
When Circumstance comes in and works them double woe.

Circumstance, that ever
Uses wicked skill,
All fond ties to sever,
Bind them as we will,—
Till our broken Being in Death is husht and still.

THE BROTHERS.



'Tis true, that we can sometimes speak of Death,
Even of the Deaths of those we love the best,
Without dismay or terror ; we can sit
In serious calm beneath deciduous trees,
And count the leaves, scarce heavier than the air,
That leave the branch and tremble to the ground ;
Or out at midnight in a gliding boat
Enjoy the waning moon, and moralize,
And say that Death is but a Mediator
Between the lower and the loftier Life.
Thus it may be with those, who only know
The great Invader, as he sometimes comes
Dismantled of his full ferocity,
Taking almost a grace of gentleness
From the surrounding atmosphere of Love,
Seeming to pity what himself inflicts,

When with soft touch he draws away the chair
From the familiar circle, and lays down
The suffe'ring burden on an easy bed,
More like a weary traveller seeking sleep
Than the weak Victim of a Tyrant's will.
For then Affection has a thousand moods,
With which to sooth the black necessity,
And form his rigid features to a smile ;—
There are the tender dues of every hour,
The pillow nightly smoothed by hands just kist,
The active care that guards the wake'ning eye,
The cautious thoughtfulness of earnest love,
The sedu'lous record of each smallest word,
The looks whose pain is steeped in balmy tears,
The tones, that growing weaker day by day
Keep strong in love as ever, to the last,—
All after-treasures of consoling wealth,
For the heart's casket of departed things.
But when, like the Malay who, mad for blood,
And raving onward, deals on either side
Precipi'tate blows of unaccounted rage,
The Evil seems to meet us ; when he strikes,
In some unwonted, strangely-cruel, way,
Which e'ven in fiction would have foully jarred

Against the regu'lar calm of daily thought,
And broken, like a crash of lawless war,
On our mind's peace ; and when, to point the sting,
Some simplest instrument of common use
Conveys the poison, then the Demon wears
His native Horror,—Death is Death indeed !
To read some twenty words in black and white,
And be made wretched for one's life to come !
To be laid senseless by a certain form
Of syllables pronounced in a low voice !
To see a cloud of gathe'ring agony
Upon the forehead of a trusted friend,
And almost ere the Name has past his lips,
The name of some one that we both adore,
To know *that One* is dead, is gone, is dead,
When, how, we do not know, we do not ask,
Wrapt up in that immense idea of “ dead,”
And sensible to nothing else or more !
I know not which is worse,—this stunning shock
This sudden transformation of our being
Into one whole of pain, or that thick coil
Of expectation, presages, and fears,
Which winds itself so close about our heart,
When first the barely-possible event
Of such a loss takes substance in the mind,

And then, as every languid-linge'ring day
Brings fear more nigh to deso'late certainty,
Tighter and tighter draw the racking bonds,
Till anguish can no longer be contained,
But bursts into loud passion, to sink down
Into dumb stupor.

Reader ! the hard fates
Of those, who in these tributary lines
May find some shield from a forgetting world,
Tried with this double strain of Misery,
The souls of those who loved them ; Reader ! pray
That this exceeding sorrow may not fall
Back to its hell, barren of holy fruit,—
That through these two deep rents which woe has made
In their most sacred feelings, they may see
Into the peaceful Heaven that lies beyond.

There were two Brothers, of near kin to me,—
We've played together many a summer eve,
In that short maidenhood of Life when eve
Can find the heart no heavier than at morn,
And day and darkness are all one in joy ;
They grew together from the self-same stem,
Of little diffe'rent highths, together drank
The dews of love and close domestic care,

Together sprouted out their vigo'rous green
As Nature's secret will devised the way.
And when the birthright Beauty, bold and free,
Of high-born English boys, was ripe'ning fast
Upon them, home, its halls, and groves, and fields,
Were silent of those two accustomed voices,
Nearly at the same time,—how soon to be
Silent of them for ever ! They went forth
Into the distances of land and sea,
One far away, then nearer, then more far,
The roving comrade of the roving waves,—
The other, by the duty of the sword,
Taken to pleasant places, where the arm
Of British power extends its guardian strength
O'er stranger lands too weak to stand alone.
Thus after various changes, wanderings,
And hard experiences of manly life,
In that delicious spot, whose central charms
Embrace the eastern and the western earth,
The fairest of the fair Ionian isles,
The Brothers met once more ;—the other's face
Each lookt upon, nor knew it was his brother's ;—
For in our mortal spring the craftsman Time
Is active to destroy and recreate,
Both in the inner and the outer Man ;—

But joyous recognition soon came on,
First by degrees, then in a rapid flash,
And the old chain of kind fraternity
Was linkt afresh, and, for some few short days,
The Nature of that island-paradise
Witnest their love, witnest their social sports,
And interchange of happiest memories.
Beneath the olive-grove's fine-fretted vault,
They spoke together of the beechen shades,
Spread in broad masses round their distant home ;—
On that cliff-platform, where the large sea-bird
Floats level by, and the sail-studded strait
Lies like a lake within that crescent coast
And the full breast-work of Albanian hills,
They talkt of that dear terrace whose smooth length
Is strecht before their childhood's lordly home,
Above the lawny green befringed with flowers
And sleepy stream and swelling meads beyond.
Into the gulf of the absorbing past,
Those lightly-pinioned hours past one by one ;
And then the Soldier and the Sailor stood,
For the last time, together on the deck,
While slow the sails expanded their white breasts
In the caresses of the lover breeze.
I am a student of the Heart of Man,

And thus 'tis not in curious wilfulness,
That I would know, whether some deeper sense
Than of mere pain at parting did not pass
Athwart their spirits, as they turned away?
Whether did not a stern presentiment
Of many-folded evil hanging round
The personality of their two lives
Cast a dense shade upon the paths that led
Over the Future's hope-illumined plain,
And make the words of sweet encouragement
Faint on their mutual lips, and string their hands
With a convulsive force in that last grasp,
And dim with sudden mist their tearless eyes?
To tell the sum of this sad tale, few words
Are best and all-sufficient;—to display
The forms of pain and death and misery,
With an elabo'rate anatomic skill,
And mould the stark realities of ill
Into fantastic shapes of speech and thought,
Is not the Poet's function, must not be:—
He knows the fineness of his music-strings,
The tender fibres of all-human love,
And will not strike them with a reckless hand,
As if he beat upon a savage drum.
Enough, that ere the earth its annual round

Had many times accomplisht, those bright boys
Had met strange deaths, both strange tho' different ;—
The one, from all his comrades singled out
By a mysterious hazard, the sure aim
Of an assassin's hand broke off the bough
Of his full fragrant promise,—he is laid
In that warm forein dust,—rude soldier tears
Have dropt upon his decorated tomb.
The other, ere this wound unhealable
Had lost the first intenseness of its sore,
Perisht, without a trace, without a sign,
In the huge ocean-deserts of the North,
He, and his fellows, and their dwelling-place,
One doom for all,—one darkness undisturbed,—
One desolation for affection's shrine.

We all have read and loved the lovely plaint,
In which the Lyrist, whose most grateful blooms
Spring from the root of purest womanhood,
Has hymned the “ Household's ” widely scattered
“ Graves ; ”

There's not a verse but has been wept upon ;—
And I could wish this not dissimi'lar theme
Had found such skill to work it to such end ;
But my faint strain expects no stranger tears,—

It is the homage of a kinsman's grief
Written for kindred, nor has other claim :
They will inform the vague imperfect frame
With inward-flowing music of their own,
The melodies of mournful recollections,
The supplement of personal interest,
The sympathies that come far out to meet you,
And other judgment I acknowledge none.

ON A NOBLE CHILD,

EARLY DEAD.

FAREWELL to thee, thou swift-departed Stranger,
Weary with little stay,—farewell to thee !
There hung a picture in thy nursery
Of the God-boy, who slumbered in the manger,—
And oft I feared, lest Thou should'st meet the danger,
For pride of wealth or lusted empery,
Of losing that which I so loved to see,
Thy likeness to that picture, lovely Stranger.
Thou hast gone back all pure,—thy every feature
Faithful to what the limner's sacred eye
Pourtrayed the Son of God ; most blessed creature,
Thy brow unknit by passion, pain, or scorn,
Thine is the special privilege to have borne
The Cross of Love without the Agony.

DANTE'S VISION.

FROM THE "VITA NUOVA."

WITH a deep sigh, I whispered to myself,
"It must be in Necessity, one day,
That the most gentle Beatrice shall die;"
And instantly such utter loss of sense
Came on me, that my eyes were closed,—my mind
Began to work, like one delirium-bound,
And its imaginations thus to frame.
In the first wande'ring of my phantasy,
Came certain female faces, with long hair
Dishevelled, telling me, "Thou too shalt die."
Then certain faces after these appeared,
Different,—terrible to gaze upon,—
Which same addrest me, saying, "Thou art dead."
Thus, from my phantasy's first wanderings,
I came at last to be—I knew not where,
And beheld ladies walking, with long hair

Dishevelled—walking marvellously sad ;
I saw the sun grow dark, so that the stars
Appeared, and of such tint, that I could judge,
They were lamenting over some one dead,
And mighty earthquakes were about to be.
In such imaginations wondering,
And not without a sense of fear, I thought
Some friend came to me, saying, “ From this world
Thy admirable Ladie’ has past away.”

Then I began to weep right piteously ;
And not alone in phantasy I wept,
But with my eyes bathed in their own true tears.
While Heaven-ward I imagined that I gazed,
And seemed to see an Angel-multitude
Returning upwards, and before them spread
Was a small cloud of the most perfect white ;
It seemed to me, I heard those Angels sing
Gracefully sweet, and of the words they spoke,
I listened these,—“ Osanna in excelsis !”
Other than these I did not seem to hear.
Then said to me the heart so full of love,
“ Is the thing true,—lieth our Ladie dead ?”
For this, it seemed, I went to see the form
In which had dwelt that noblest blessèd soul.

My wande'ring phantasy, become so strong,
Showed me that Ladie dead,—while ladies seemed
To cover up her head with a white veil :
Such gentle aspect bore her face, methought
It said, “ I look upon the Prince of Peace.”
Thus thinking, such deep lowliness of spirit
Seized on me, that, to see my Ladie' again,
I called on Death to come and take me, saying,
“ Come thou to me, who yearneth earnestly
For thee, and see I wear thy color now.”
And when I had beheld consummated
All mournful offices, which for the dead
Use sanctions, I returned, it seemed to me,
Into my room, and there lookt straight to heaven ;
And such was the imaginative force,
That I began, loud wailing, to exclaim,
“ Most beauteous Spirit ! how blest is he who sees
Thee !”

ON THE DEATH OF — — —



I'm not where I was yesterday,
Tho' my home be still the same,
For I have lost the veriest friend
Whom ever a friend could name ;
I'm not what I was yesterday,
Tho' change there be little to see,
For a part of myself has lapst away
From Time to Eternity.

I have lost a thought that many' a year
Was most familiar food
To my' inmost mind, by night or day,
In merry or plaintive mood ;
I have lost a hope, that many' a year
Lookt far on a gleaming way,
When' the walls of Life were closing round,
And' the sky was sombre grey.

For long, too long, in distant climes
My lot was cast, and then,
A frail and casual intercourse
Was all I had with men ;
But loneliness in distant climes
I' was well content to roam,
And felt no void, for my heart was full
O' the friend it had left at home.

And now I was close to my native shores,
And I felt him at my side,
His spirit was in that homeward wind,
His voice in that homeward tide ;
For what were to me my native shores,
But that they held the scene,
Where' my youth's most genial flowers had blown,
And' affection's root had been ?

I thought, how should I see him first,
How should our hands first meet,
Within his room,—upon the stair,—
At the corner of the street ?
I thought, where should I hear him first,
How catch his greeting tone,—
And thus I went up to his door,
And' they told me he was gone !

Oh ! what is Life but a sum of love,
And Death but to lose it all ?
Weeds be for those that are left behind,
And not for those that fall !
And now how mighty a sum of love
Is lost for ever to me
. . . No, I'm not what I was yesterday,
Tho' change there be little to see.

ON A BROTHER AND SISTER.

A BROTHER and a Sister,—these two Friends,
Cast by fond Nature in one common mould,
And waited on by genial Circumstance
In all their histo'ry of familiar love,
After a parting of not quite four years,
Are peacefully united here once more.

He first, as best beseemed the manly mind,
Tried the dark walk, which has (or seems to have)
No portion in the pleasant sun or stars,
The breath of flowers or morning-song of birds,
The hand of Friendship or the lips of Love.
Whether her sad and separated soul
Received some token from that secret place,
That she might follow him and meet him there,
Or whether God, displeased that anything
Of good or evil should so long divide
Such undefiled and sacred sympathies,
Has made them one again before his face,
Are things that we perhaps shall never know.

Say not, O world of short and broken sight !
That these died young : the Bee and Butterfly
Live longer in one active sunny hour
Than the poor tortoise in his torpid years :
The lofty flights of Thought thro' clear and cloud,—
The labyrinthine ways that Poesy
Leads her beloved, the weary traverses
Of Reason, and the Haven of calm Faith,
All had been theirs ; their seamless brows had known
The seal of pain, the sacrament of tears ;
And, unless Pride and Passion and bold Sin
Are all the rule and recko'ning of our Being,
They have fulfilled as large a task of life
As ever vete'ran on the mortal field.

Thus They, who gave these favored creatures birth,
Deem it no hard infraction of the law
Which regulates the order of our race,
That they above their offspring raise the tomb,
And with parental piety discharge
The duties filial love delights to pay :
They read the perfect sense of the design
In that which seems exception, and they mourn,
Not that these dear ones are already gone,
But that *they* linger still so far behind.

TO A MOURNER.

SLEEP not,—you whose hope is dust,

Love-deserted man !

Or, if feeble body must,

Seldom as it can.

Sleep is kin to Death they tell,

You for this might love it well,

But it is a kinsman poor,

Hardly gets beyond the door,—

Never fairly dwells within

Where they rest and weep not

Who are safe from Pain and Sin ;

Sleep not, Mourner, sleep not.

Misery spent revives in Sleep,

Will has no resistance,

Anguish delves abysses deep

In that dream-existence.

Then we wake and half-believe,
That we may ourselves deceive,
That the loss our souls deplore
May be but a dream the more ;—
Till, at one sharp start, we know,
 Though we shriek and weep not,
Our *reality* of woe,—
 Therefore, brother, sleep not !

But let Sleep some wayward change
 Bring upon our being,
Let sweet fancies freely range
 With calm thoughts agreeing :
Let sad memory be abused
By the pleasure circumfused,
And dear forms no more below
Softly round us come and go ;
Or let time be buried quite,
 And the moments creep not,—
Though oblivion be delight,
 Still, poor mourner, sleep not !

For an Agony will come,
 In the instant waking,
Like a dagger driven home,
 Like a nerve in breaking ;

Consciousness recove'ring life
But confounds us in the strife,
Wholly yielded up to Pain,
As when drowned men feel again ;
In that rush of gasping thought,
 Wo for them that weep not !
Too, too, dearly may be bought
 Such repose—oh ! sleep not !

Rather think the Evil down,
 Rather weep it out ;
Certain grief remits its frown
 Easier than doubt.

There are strong yet gentle powers
In the growth of many hours ;
Sorrow longer-lived will gain
Something more of peace than pain,
Such as God's still works possess,
 Things that sow or reap not
In the world of more and less,
 Live and die, but sleep not.

TO THE MEMORY OF G. V. C.

THOU too art gone, and yet I hardly know
 Why thou didst care to go :
Thou wert so well at heart, so spirit-clear,
 So heavenly-calm, though here ;
But thus it is, and, it would seem, no more
 Can we, who on the shore
Of the loud world still walk, escape the din,
 And lie awhile within
The quiet sunlight of thy filmless mind
 And rise refresht, refined ;
Yet am I mild and tempered in my grief,
 Having a sure relief ;—
For these dear hours on life's dull length were spent
 By rarest accident,

And *now* I have Thee by me when I will,
Hear thy wise words, and fill
My soul with thy calm looks ; *now* I can tame
Ill thoughts by thy mere name.
Death, the Divorcer, has united us
With bands impervious
To any tooth of Time, for they are wove
Of the same texture as an Angel's Love.

Feb. 23, 1835.

TWO VISITS TO A GRAVE.

I stood by the grave of one beloved,
On' a chill and windless night,—
When not a blade of grass was moved,
In its rigid sheath of white.

The starry armament lookt down,
From' the glassy waste the while,
Perchance they could not seem to frown,
But they did not seem to smile.

Long time had past since they laid him there,
But I heeded not of time,
I knew the stone, tho' blank and bare,
Unmarkt by line or rhyme.



Madly I wept that I had been
Over the wild wild sea,
When he had found in this last scene,
A home and a privacy.

The gloomy stillness of the hour
Came coldly to my heart,
And Faith and Hope grew weak in power
To soothe the sinner's smart;

I almost curst the good great God,—
And vowed that I would be
Even as he beneath the sod,
Tho' I had not lived as he.

I left the tomb,—I ceast to weep,—
But grisly forms of pain
Came thronging from the fields of sleep,
And forced me back again.

That morn the hoar-frost still was there,
In place of balmy dew,—
Unshaken was the silvered hair
Of the old church-yard yew.

I heard a company of birds
Their grateful carol troll,
And' a sense of prayer, too much for words,
Arose within my soul.

The web of early mist was gone,
Fresh-wove in nature's loom,
For the sun, like a bold free spirit, shone
Clear on the gliste'ning tomb.

I worshipt, as the gold flood poured
On' the scene, before so dim ;
And when the Beauti'ful I adored,
My thoughts were still of him.

I thought, I prayed, and thus became
More full of sweet content,
Watching the sun-beams gently frame
The earth to merriment.

I was not happy, but I prayed,
At heart, that' I might *not* be
As he who in that grave was laid,
Till I had lived as he.

LIFE IN DEATH.

INDEED you do me wrong,—I merit not
Those hard censorious eyes and dull regards,
Because I have not wept, or sighed, or raved,
Or sat in a mute madness, tho' I knew
That she, whom we so loved, is gone away.
I have lost nothing, why then should I weep?
She is to *me* the same she ever was,
A never-ceasing presence, a life-light,
In the dark watches of the pleasant night,
Or some far darker passages of day.

If I would weep, or mourn her fancied loss,
The azure fire, that wells from her calm eyes,
Laps up my tears, and tells me she is here ;

If I am sick at heart, she sits beside me,
And lays the velvet back of her white hand
Upon my cheek, to ask if all be well,
Or parts the hair upon my heated brows.
Since that one instant, in itself a life,
When, as commissioned messengers, my eyes
Went to her, and brought back into my soul
A gift, the greatest of all possible gifts,
Which God-empowered Man can give to Man,
A notion of the abso'lute Beautiful,
Since then, all nature has been one to me,
One Form impregnated with her sole Spirit :
I feel the ambient sweetness of her breath
In flowe'ring rosiers and the woods of spring ;
Her voice is gushing from the nightingale ;
There's not a cloud that walks the' unsullied air,
But takes from her its majesty of gait,
For Space was made to show how she could move.
I do not say, that when I saw her lie
Husht to cold sleep by Nature's lullabies,
(The same that plaintive Nurse eternally
Sings as she rocks to rest her dearly-loved,)
I did not for one moment stare aghast,
And know the blood stood still about my heart ;
But soon the wailers left me there alone,

And in the quiet of the gloom I saw
The blessed image, moving, ministe'ring,
By me, about me,—just as heretofore.

O ye! who talk of Death, and mourn for Death,
Why do you raise a phantom of your weakness,
And then shriek loud to see what ye have made?
There is no Death, to those who know of Life—
No Time, to those who see Eternity.

DEATH IN LIFE.

“ Sie hören nicht die folgenden Gesänge,
Die Seelen, denen ich die ersten sang ;
Mein Lied ertönt der unbekanntten Menge,
Ihr Beifall selbst macht meinem Herzen bang.”

GÖTHE.

I PRAY you, dearest friend, urge me no more
To clothe my thoughts in melody and rhyme,
And lay them out, upon the open shore,
To catch the breezes of this wayward time.

For you, who know the sum of my sad fate,
Should be the last to urge so hard a suit ;
When the heart reels beneath misfortune's weight,
Oh ! let the hand be still, the lips be mute.

You know what I have won, what I have lost,
You saw the glory, see you not the gloom?
Are not my hairs all blancht with mise'ry's frost,
Do I not breathe the vapors of the tomb?

But even were I, as I would be, calm,—
Thought I, where she is gone, that I could go,—
Had Hope and Memory full store of balm,
To heal the ceaseless soreness of the blow:

Even then, in this my solitary lot,
With every fibre of my soul unstrung,
How should I sing to those who know me not,
How would they listen while the Stranger sung?

In truth I do not hate the gene'ral world,—
I hold my brother mortals far too dear
To watch unhurt the critic's lip upcurled,
To meet with smiles the pedant's silent sneer.

And if perchance my wave'ring spirit swerved,
Or failed in words to reach the' imagined aim,
How would they judge the penalty deserved?
How would they weigh the pity and the blame?

I am too faint to scorn when they reprove,
Too broken to confront their rigid law,
Who have no mantle of familiar love,
To shield the frailty, and conceal the flaw.

It was not thus, when She was by my side,
Under whose eye the current of my song,
In all the power and bliss of peaceful pride,
Transparent with her beauty, flowed along.

How little reekt I then what others thought,
What others said, the many and the cold !
Her dear content was all the praise I sought,
And with her smile what craven were not bold ?

That is all gone,—but her immortal part
Still holds communion with its former home,
That inmost chamber of the lover's heart,
Where even you and friendship cannot come ;

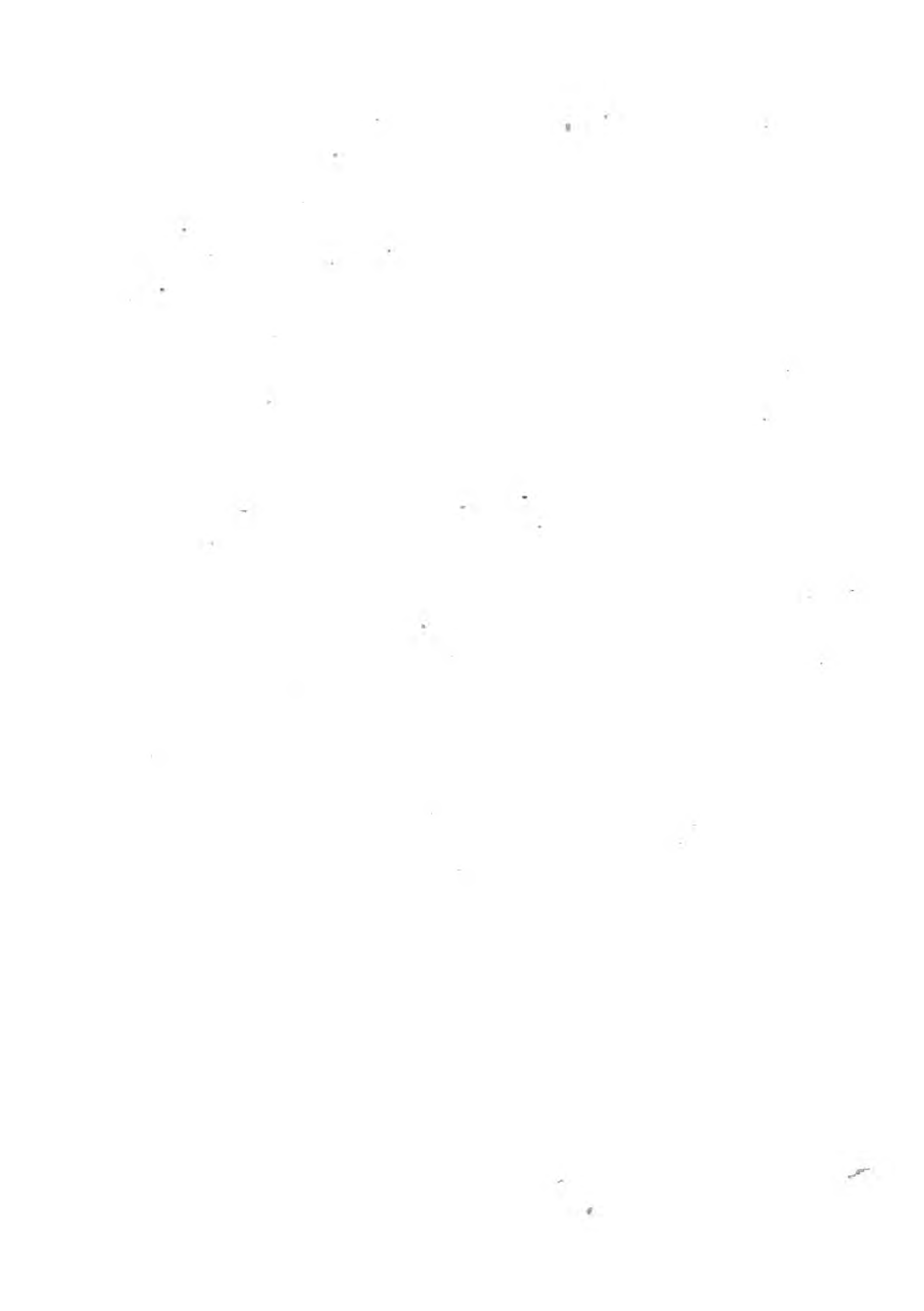
And when this image of my glory fled
Attunes the discord to its holy will,
Though not a word be writ or utterèd,
It matters not,—I am the Poet still.

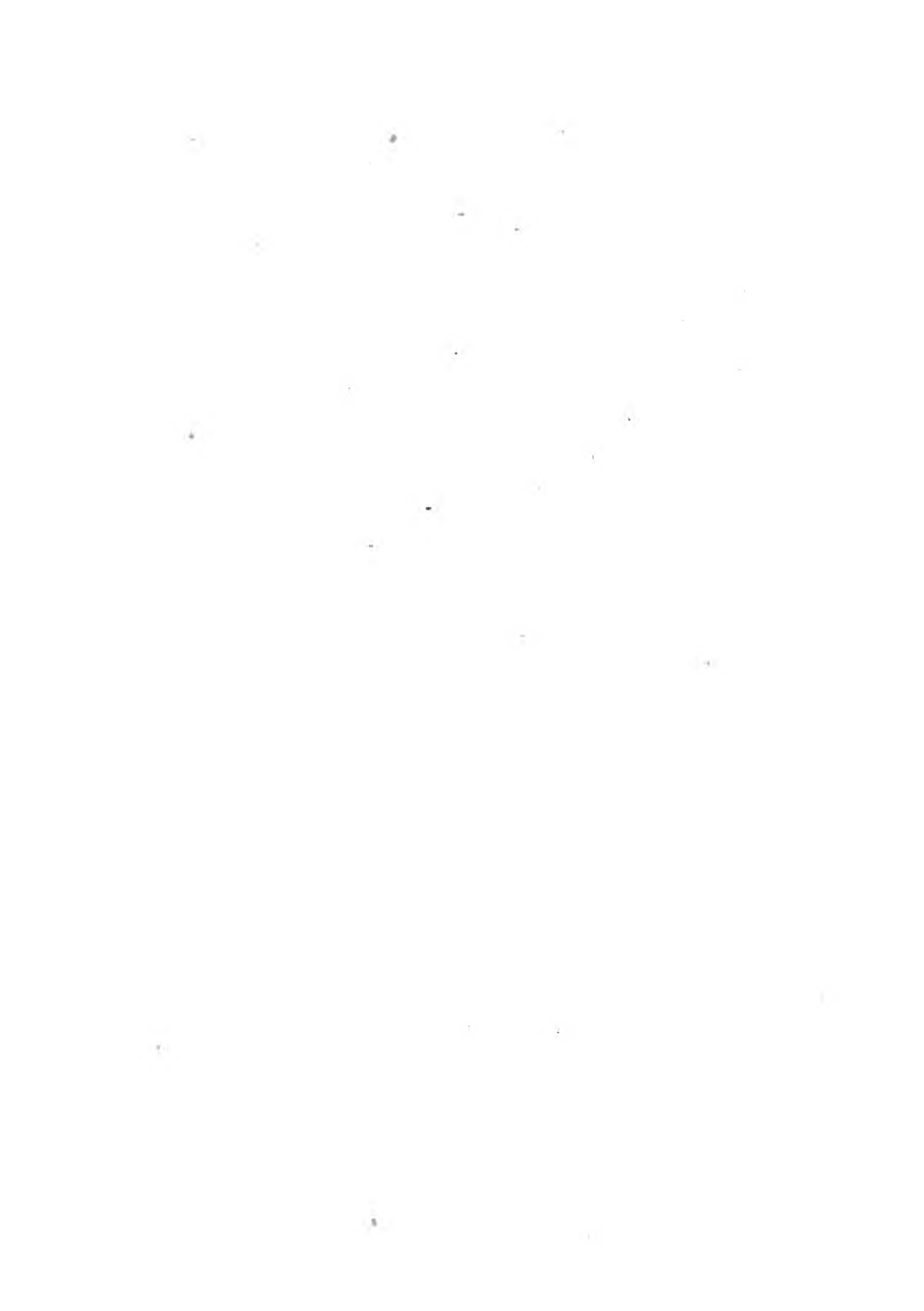
So let me rest,—nor think that you can bless
My joyless life with hope of other fame,—
Than that the memory of her loveliness
May live in union with my humble name.



THE END.

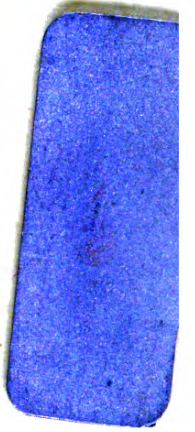
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